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{ From Beginning,
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EGLANTINE.

How sweetly, after gentle rain,
Comes floating down the grassy lane
The scent of eglantine !
See, wife, the old familiar seat
Bids welcome to a cool retreat,
This summer morning fine.

Sit down, dear heart, there needs no haste
For us to make, we well can waste
The longest of our days,
Our working-time is gone and past,
And we have leisure at the last,
For Nature and her ways.

So sit thee, darling, by my side,
Fond friend and firm, true wife and tried,
Best help in darkest hours,
Across the meads the linnet calls,
The breeze shakes down at intervals
The eglantine's pink flowers.

The eglantine ! the eglantine !
Ah, tender, brown-eyed wife of mine,
I see a shadow creep
Across the calmness of thy brow,
The blossom, dropping from the bough,
Wakes sorrow from its sleep.

Nay, dearest, dry the starting tear,
Is she not still our daughter dear ?
Our pretty Eglantine ?
Is she not yet as much our child,
As when upon her birth we smiled,
Thy little one and mine ?

What though she chose, as daughters do,
To merge the old life in the new,
And gave to newer love
The right to take her by the hand,
And lead her from her fatherland,
God keepeth watch above.

What though the sea rolls wide between
That strange wild home where she is queen,
And this calm nook of ours ;
What though her southern dwelling-place
Is brightened by no English face,
Nor homely English flowers.

What though our poor hearts surely know
That to her home we cannot go,
However sore we yearn ;
Nor, since our darling hath her share
Of mother's bliss, and mother's care,
Can she to us return.

Yet, wife, we shall retrieve our loss ;
There is an ocean all must cross ;
Thy turn will come, and mine !
And we shall welcome to the bowers
Of Paradise, life's flower of flowers,
Our little Eglantine !

All The Year Round.

DECEMBER.

WE watched the springtime's robe of green,
The summer's wondrous wealth of flowers,
The stain where autumn's touch had been,
The gloom of winter's darkening hours,
A moment now we turn to look
Along the path the year has trod,
Ere yet the angel bears the book
Of good and evil up to God.

The time has vanished. What is won
When we have counted up our gains ?
The time has vanished. What is done —
Of all our toil what end remains ?
The storm clouds darken over life,
The wheat dies out, the tares take root ;
And in our hearts the seeds of strife
Spring up and bear a bitter fruit.

So was it ever. So it must
Be ever till the end draws near.
The spirit, fettered by the dust,
Must ever strive for mastery here.
Well for us that through life's dark loom
A wiser hand the shuttle throws ;
Well for us that amid the gloom
A ray of comfort comes — He knows.

He knows, and he can understand.
To weary hearts the thought should be
A fountain in an arid land,
A rainbow o'er the stormy sea.
The year has gone on rapid wing,
The past is dark, the future dim ;
We know not yet what life may bring —
He knows — and we can trust to him.
Golden Hours. R. S. W.

Εἰς ἐκείνην.

SWEET spirit, from that semblance free
Of frail mortality, see how
My widowed heart divorced from love and rest,
Unblest and unblest,
Still mourns for thee.
My couch of silence hast thou visited ?
There lies the head
That never ached, but hands of thine,
With looks of love and touch divine,
Its pillow spread ;
There beats the heart so lonely and unfriended,
That if on joy depended
Its pulse of life, that ministry
With thy last sigh had ceased to be.
In grief's forlorn captivity,
With hope unblended,
That left me none beloved, loved by none,
Now thou art gone,
To pains unshared, unsharing,
Of every good despairing,
Unsoothed, alone !

BY THE LATE CHARLES BADHAM.

Temple Bar.

From The Contemporary Review.

MISS BURNEY'S NOVELS.*

MISS BURNEY lived to be a classic, but in the course of becoming one she married and changed her name. And to this accident is probably to be ascribed the singular fact that the Englishwoman, who in her lifetime enjoyed the most flattering popularity and wrote the most entertaining novels, as well as the fullest and liveliest memoirs, is so imperfectly known forty years after her death, that two or three times during the last month it has happened to the writer of this article to hear it asked in cultivated society what Miss Burney had to do with Madame D'Arblay, and whether the "Diary and Letters" are not better worth reading in the original French. This would hardly have happened had the novels and the memoirs ever been gathered together under one name in a complete library edition. For though even in that case it is more than probable that nine people out of ten would not have read either, still ignorance on the subject must all have gone to one account and been thereby the easier to meet; the confusion as to the very identity of the author would have been avoided. As it is, we find the novels in some houses and the "Diary" in others; but, for the most part, outside the small world where literature means business as well as pleasure, only a vague familiarity with the titles of both surviving a half-forgotten reading of Macaulay's essay. And yet there are few more entertaining books to be found in any library than either the "Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay," or the novels of Miss Burney; and no two sets of volumes of which it can be more confidently said, that to have read the one is to have gained a great increase in power of enjoying the other. Not that the interdependence of these books is a relation of perfect equality. Though the reader who already knows "Evelina" and "Cecilia,"

will have more interest in making intimate acquaintance with the author, than one to whom they are unknown, the fascination of the "Diary and Letters" is quite strong enough to hold of itself the attention of any reader who is not hopelessly dull. But in regard to the novels, experience goes the other way. It is certain that at the present day, many persons of intelligence, taste, and humor stick fast in "Evelina" and "Cecilia;" and whether the fact be to the credit of our generation or not, it is at least worthy of as much consideration as the opposite fact, that a hundred years ago these books were greedily devoured by the whole reading public, from Johnson and Burke, and Gibbon and Sheridan, down to obscure and unlettered individuals, who could not even express their admiration in grammatical English. We have had a Jane Austen revival, and more recently Miss Ferrier's novels have come back into vogue; but though Messrs. George Bell and Sons brought out new editions of "Evelina" last year and of "Cecilia" this year, their enterprise has not so far met with the response it deserves. We hear continually of people who have procured the volumes in confident anticipation of amusement, and have been obliged to lay them down in mortified disappointment after a vain effort to struggle through the first few chapters.

The truth is that the very gift that first made Miss Burney's reputation now stands in the way of her popularity. She was so completely mistress of the art of letting her personages reveal their own characters, that she could afford to dispense to an unusual extent with the showman's part. She constructed her personages not from within (as is the modern fashion) but by means of a thousand minute touches showing their conversation and behavior in an infinite variety of such small circumstances as make up the daily round of existence. She positively revelled in descriptive minutiae of this sort. Nothing was too trivial for her, nothing too intricate in the web of petty embarrassments and mortifications and misunderstandings, that make the

* *Evelina; or, the History of a Young Lady's Entrance into the World.* By FRANCES BURNEY. With a Preface and Notes by A. R. Ellis. London: G. Bell & Sons.

Cecilia; or, Memoirs of an Heiress. By the same. 2 vols. London: G. Bell & Sons.

sum of a vast majority of human lives, and a tremendous factor of the remainder. Thanks to unusually buoyant spirits and a never-flagging sense of the ridiculous, she was constantly amused where others are only bored; and according to the infallible rule that, given the necessary powers of expression, authors never bore till they are bored themselves, she was able to make amusing to others the commonplace things that afforded entertainment to herself. Moreover, her success in her own day was quite as much due to the fact that her material was commonplace as to the keen perception of character, and the racy humor she displayed in working it up. Only the chosen few might appreciate her literary skill, but it needed no special gifts of culture to enter into the agitations of Evelina's first ball, or to applaud the horse-play of Captain Mirvan. However, it is necessary to understand a situation or a character before we can be amused by it. And as nothing in life changes so fast as its surface, the author who gives most pains to the finish of this, is also the first to become obsolete. Fashions in manner and dress and speech are proverbially ephemeral, and except for those in whom the antiquarian taste has been somehow developed, they lose charm and even meaning in passing out of date. Heroes and heroines, whose coats and gowns, and curtsies and bows, are all behind the time, of whom the colloquial talk is a forgotten jargon, and the ceremony as strange as the ritual of a foreign religion, stand no chance in competition with the crowd of ladies and gentlemen who are daily turned out by contemporary novelists, wearing costumes and talking a language of which every fold and every phrase makes a claim upon the reader's sympathy, and an item in the general index to the author's meaning. Miss Burney's personages, once so fashionable and so familiar, have grown strange now that a century has passed over their heads; and though underneath the disguise of their old-world costumes they are still fresh and human, this is a secret only to be discovered at the cost of more careful reading than the modern world is apt to

give to novels. This being so, we are sometimes inclined to wish that Miss Burney had described her characters more broadly, and explained the circumstances of their lives in such a running commentary as would put us quickly *au fait* of the social *milieu* of a hundred years ago. But such "posting up," however convenient some of us might find it to-day, must certainly have been tiresome to contemporary readers, and could hardly have failed to lessen the intrinsic literary value of the books. Miss Burney had more talent for dramatic presentation than for narrative, and she is only at her best when she has collected a crowd of personages on her page, and set them all talking and acting at cross-purposes. Her scenes of this description would have lost incalculably by the introduction of explanatory passages that hindered the rapid play of character and blunted the point of the dialogue. And apart from these things, which are supremely good of their kind, it cannot be said that there is any element in Miss Burney's novels that is good enough to live on its own merits. Her plots are ingeniously constructed and coherently carried out. And the solid stuff of her characters is in consistent keeping with their surface humors. All is reasonable and natural in the wise and good personages, so that we can understand them and sympathize with them at every point of their career; but there is nothing exceptionable about them. It is impossible to get up the smallest excitement on their account; and were it not that the comedy scenes are so extraordinarily vivacious that a very quiet background is absolutely necessary to their relief, it would have to be said that the serious scenes are monotonously dull. Taken by themselves they certainly are dull — so dull that most readers attempt to skip them. But this will not do at all. They are not superficial padding, like the dull chapters of so many modern novels, but the bony structure of the plot. To leave out the serious scenes is to lose all chance of understanding the lively ones, and to find nothing but mere confusion in the whole books. The reader who has not enough persistence to read "Eve-

lina" and "Cecilia" steadily, must give them up altogether, or prepare himself for a new effort by some extraneous reading of an introductory kind.

Without a doubt, the best introduction to Miss Burney's novels is the "Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay." (And here let me say that I use the phrase, "Miss Burney's novels," to denote only "Evelina" and "Cecilia," gladly profiting by the one little grain of advantage resulting from the double designation of the author: "Camilla" and "The Wanderer" are so much less entertaining than the earlier books, that it is a satisfaction to feel oneself literally correct in ascribing them to a different name.) Though Miss Burney never made the mistake of writing an autobiography in the form of a novel, she put a great deal of herself into *Evelina*, and of her ideal of life into the character and position of *Cecilia*; and we understand her two heroines all the better for being thoroughly acquainted with herself. Then, again, though she had no adventures, either at Streatham or at court, which were exact parallels of the scenes in her novels, there is yet enough of general likeness between the real life described in her diary and the fictitious world of her fancy to familiarize us in advance with the tone, and much of the detail, of the latter. The material is, in fact, precisely the same. Whether Miss Burney is inventing or recording, it is always the same minute detail of character and circumstance that she chooses to describe. The only difference is that, when she writes to near relations and intimate friends, she gives freer rein to her feelings than when she addresses the public. And this vein of subjectivity supplies just what is wanting to make the novels generally attractive.

The novels give an impression of a singularly keen, clever, observant woman, with a sense of the ridiculous too much developed to be a very sympathetic, or even safe, friend. The diary reveals an exceptionally warm heart and a disposition very strangely compounded of good sense and sensitiveness, quick impulse and persistent loyalty, strong powers of judgment coupled with an almost morbid

self-distrust, and tastes so simple and domestic that, in spite of all her friends felt at the time, and critics have written since, about the years she wasted at court, it is difficult to escape the conviction that wherever Frances Burney's lot had fallen, her quick womanly sympathies and active interest in the affairs of life would have hindered her from giving her best time and energy to literary work. She might have found a happier slavery, perhaps, in her father's house or in a home of her own than in the royal household, but a slave to other people's whims and fancies, as well as to their tempers and serious necessities, she would probably have been wherever she had lived, for the simple reason that she was above all things affectionate, and cared more for the good-will of those about her than for any other worldly consideration. She wrote "*Evelina*" because the world amused her, and she was too shy to say in any other way how much it amused her. She wrote "*Cecilia*" because the world told her it was amused by her, and that she could make her fortune by going on amusing it. But even in this second book there were indications that the natural spring was pretty nearly exhausted, while a deterioration of style betrayed the fact that her mastery of the means of literary expression was not sufficient to keep her works up to the mark when the vivacity of the first spontaneous impulse should be spent. She might have overcome this disadvantage by laborious training of her talent; but for this she had no inclination, or at any rate not inclination enough to conquer her fear of the contemporary prejudice against learned women. Even in the house of Mrs. Thrale, she describes herself as hiding a book under a chair-cushion, so as not to be caught in the unfeminine act of reading; and when Johnson began to teach her Latin, she was weak enough to back out of the lessons, fearing that they would win her the reputation of a blue-stocking. Johnson liked her none the less for her timidity, and neither need we. But it is as well to remember these things when apportioning the blame for her falling away from literature. She used her literary talent

first as an outlet for her surplus wit and wisdom, and next as a means of making money; but she had not sufficient love of literature to induce her to sacrifice to it a jot of even conventional esteem. It follows that she is seen to best advantage in the book where she appears as daughter, sister, friend, servant (there is really no other word for the position she held at court), and finally wife and mother. In the "Diary and Letters" we not only learn how largely voluntary were the restrictions she imposed upon her literary work, but how much her private life gained in charm and usefulness and happiness by the subordination of the author's part; and, learning this, we forgive her the more easily for having partially hidden the talent which, well husbanded, might have given us more "Evelinas" and "Cecilias." If, indeed, there be not a sort of hypocrisy about all lamentations over sins of literary omission, and, by consequence, something superfluous in forgiveness of them. Delightful as "Evelina" and "Cecilia" are to those whose taste they suit, it is doubtful whether we should get more enjoyment out of a dozen novels of the same quality than we do out of these two. And, as has been said already, at the present moment these two are more than enough for most people.

It is to be regretted that Miss Ellis, who acts as chaperone to Miss Burney in Messrs. Bell's new editions, has not set to work in a more business-like way to smooth the road to appreciation of her author. She had it in her power to do much, and she has not done it. Instead of furnishing the reader with a concise argument of the plot of each book, and a descriptive catalogue of the *dramatis personæ*, which would have prepared him at the start to understand the general drift of things, and to know with what sort of person he had to deal every time a new name appeared upon the page, she has written a lively *causerie* about the incidents of Miss Burney's life, and repeated much of the criticism of her novels that was current in the literary and court society of her day. Her introductory essays are interesting, but their interest is for those who already know both the novels and the diary. For those who do not know them, they are too discursive to be instructive, and a little too controversial in tone to be altogether attractive. But these faults are just those which it is almost impossible to avoid in dealing with a subject round which so much pleasant gossip has gathered, that there is an

anecdote or a *mot* to be quoted at every point. And if the industry of Miss Ellis has a little exceeded her discretion, it ought to be ground rather of thankfulness than of complaint to one who, gleaning after her, finds this part of the field so well reaped that the straightforward telling of the stories of the books is the only thing yet remaining to be done.

To begin, then, with the plot of "Evelina." The story opens with a correspondence between Lady Howard, of Howard Grove, and the Reverend Arthur Villars, of Berry Hill. This lady and gentleman are old friends one of the other, besides being the two living persons most interested in the welfare of Evelina. Mr. Villars was, first, tutor to her grandfather, then guardian to her mother, and is now her own adoptive father. Lady Howard is bound to her by ties of equal antiquity. She knew her grandfather; her daughter was the intimate friend of the girl's mother; her granddaughter has been the playmate of Evelina herself. In the course of the correspondence between these two venerable persons, the story of Evelina's antecedents is explained. It is this. Half a century ago Mr. Evelyn, a young man of property and position, married (contrary to the advice and entreaties of his friends) "a waiting-maid at a tavern," whose pretty face caught his fancy; and having committed this imprudence, found it expedient "to abandon his native land and fix his abode in France."

Thither [writes Mr. Villars] he was followed by shame and repentance, feelings which his heart was not framed to support; for notwithstanding he had been too weak to resist the allurements of beauty, which Nature, though a niggard to her of every other boon, had with a lavish hand bestowed on his wife; yet he was a young man of excellent character, and till thus unworthily infatuated, of unblemished conduct.

Mr. Evelyn only lived two years after his ill-judged marriage, and on his death bequeathed an infant daughter to the care of his old tutor. Again I must quote Mr. Villars:—

Mr. Evelyn left to me a legacy of a thousand pounds, and the sole guardianship of his daughter's person till her eighteenth year; conjuring me in the most affecting terms to take charge of her education till she was able to act with propriety for herself; but in regard to fortune, he left her wholly dependent on her mother, to whose tenderness he earnestly recommended her. Thus, though he would not

to a woman low-bred and illiberal as Mrs. Evelyn, trust the conduct and morals of his daughter, he nevertheless thought proper to secure to her the respect and duty which from her own child were certainly her due; but, unhappily, it never occurred to him that the mother on her part would fail in affection or justice.

The "low-bred and illiberal" woman in course of time married a Frenchman, and changed her style from Mrs. Evelyn to Madame Duval, under which appellation she plays a large part in the story. Mr. Villars was faithful to his trust, and educated Miss Evelyn carefully up to her eighteenth year — and with the greatest success. He writes to Lady Howard: —

I need not speak to your ladyship of the virtues of that excellent young creature. She loved me as a father; nor was Mrs. Villars less valued by her; while she became so dear, that her loss was little less afflictive than that which I have since sustained in Mrs. Villars herself.

These happy eighteen years ended, Mr. Villars had no further right over the person of his ward, and when Madame Duval asked to have her committed to her own care, he was obliged to comply. Miss Evelyn left her guardian's home for that of her mother and stepfather. Here she was importuned to marry a man whose manners were vulgar. She rebelled; anger, threats, and positive cruelty were used to bring her to obedience, and she took refuge in a secret marriage with Sir John Belmont, "a very profligate man, who had but too successfully used means to insinuate himself into her favor." She soon found that she had exchanged the frying-pan for the fire. Sir John Belmont had expected to secure her fortune as well as herself, and on finding that Madame Duval had power and determination to withhold her daughter's money, he destroyed the certificate of marriage, and abandoned his newly-married wife. The deserted wife fled to her former guardian for protection, and soon after died in giving birth to a daughter, Evelina, the heroine of the book. Mr. Villars caused Madame Duval to be informed of her daughter's unhappy death, and of the birth of the child. On receipt of the intelligence, that lady had a severe fit of illness occasioned (as Mr. Villars heard) by remorse. But beyond this, she gave no sign of interest in her granddaughter, till Evelina reached her sixteenth year. At that point she surprised Lady Howard with a letter, of which the contents were immediately communicated to Mr. Villars.

She tells me that she has for many years past been in continual expectation of making a journey to England, which prevented her writing for information concerning this unhappy subject, by giving her hopes of making personal inquiries, but family occurrences have still detained her in France, which country she now sees no prospect of quitting. She has, therefore lately used her utmost endeavors to obtain a faithful account of whatever related to her ill-advised daughter; the result of which, giving her *some reason* to apprehend that upon her death-bed she bequeathed an infant orphan to the world, she most graciously says, that if you, with whom *she understands* the child is placed, will procure authentic proofs of its relationship to her, you may send it to Paris, where she will properly provide for it. This woman is, undoubtedly, at length self-convicted of her unnatural behavior; it is evident from her writing, that she is still as vulgar and illiterate as when her first husband, Mr. Evelyn, had the weakness to marry her.

Lady Howard expresses a few sentiments on the subject, and then reminds Mr. Villars that a yearly visit from Evelina to Howard Grove has fallen into arrear, and begs that the girl may be sent to her shortly. Mr. Villars is much troubled by the news of Madame Duval's letter, but determined not to part with the girl. It would have been hard to do so in any case, but Madame Duval being what she is he says: "Not only my affection, but my humanity, recoils at the barbarous idea of deserting the sacred trust reposed in me." And he goes on to explain that it is only because he cannot bear the child to be out of sight, that he has intermitted the visits to Howard Grove. The subject is allowed to drop for some months, during which Mr. Villars has a severe illness. On his recovery, Lady Howard writes him a letter of congratulation, and makes a very bold proposal. Mrs. Mirvan is going to spend the spring in London for the sake of her daughter, who is old enough to be introduced to society, and they want Evelina to join the party.

Do not start at this proposal [the good lady writes], it is time Evelina should see something of the world. When young people are too rigidly sequestered from it, their lively and romantic imaginations paint it as a paradise of which they have been beguiled; but when they are shown it properly and in due time, they see it such as it really is, equally shared by pain and pleasure, hope and disappointment.

Mr. Villars admits the truth of these remarks as applied to Miss Mirvan, but

holds that in Evelina's peculiar circumstances, a visit to London can only be fraught with danger, and while consenting to her going to Howard Grove, prays that she may not be taken to town. Ten days later Evelina arrives at Howard Grove, and Lady Howard writes to her guardian a faithful relation of her impressions of her charge:—

She is a little angel! I cannot wonder that you sought to monopolize her. Her face and person answer my most refined ideas of complete beauty; and this though a subject of less importance to you or to me than any other, is yet so striking, it is not possible to pass it unnoticed. Had I not known from whom she received her education, I should, at first sight of so perfect a face, have been in pain for her understanding; since it has been long and justly remarked, that folly has ever sought alliance with beauty. She has the same gentleness in her manners, the same natural graces in her motion that I formerly so much admired in her mother. Her character seems truly ingenuous and simple; and at the same time that nature has blessed her with an excellent understanding, and great quickness of parts, she has a certain air of inexperience and innocence that is extremely interesting.

So far the introduction: at this stage the action of the book begins, and the story is mainly told in the journal letters of Evelina herself. The brightness and vivacity of her style make an agreeable change from the sententiousness of Mr. Villars and Lady Howard; and the reader who has reached this point will have cleared those chapters of the book which it is most pardonable to find dull.

No sooner is Evelina established at Howard Grove, than Mrs. Mirvan learns that her husband (who is an officer in the navy) is suddenly returning home after an absence of seven years, and desires his wife and daughter to meet him in London. The projected visit to town now assumes a new character. Captain Mirvan hates London; therefore they will stay only a week instead of a whole season, and that week will be passed in sight-seeing, such as family parties from the country delight in. Lady Howard writes once more to Mr. Villars to beg permission for Evelina to join the party. Evelina adds a girlish letter of her own to the sententious epistle of her hostess, and the double importunity bears down the old man's prudent resistance. With the arrival of the party in town, Evelina's epistolary journal begins. The first delightful experience she has to describe is going to the play, and seeing Garrick in

the "Suspicious Husband." She is enraptured:—

His action, at once so graceful and so free! his voice, so clear, so melodious, yet so wonderfully various in its tones! such animation! every look speaks!

And when he dances, she envies his partner, and declares she almost wished to have jumped on the stage and joined them. She resolves to ask Mrs. Mirvan to take her to the play every night while she is in town. Next she goes shopping:

We have been a *shopping*, as Mrs. Mirvan calls it, all this morning, to buy silks, caps, gauzes, and so forth. The shops are really very entertaining, especially the mercers; there seem to be six or seven men belonging to each shop; and every one took care, by bowing and smirking, to be noticed. We were conducted from one to another, and carried from room to room with so much ceremony, that at first I was almost afraid to go on. At the milliner's the ladies we met were so much dressed, that I should rather have imagined they were making visits than purchases. But what most diverted me was that we were more frequently served by men than by women: and such men! so finical! so affected! they seemed to understand every part of a woman's dress better than we do ourselves; and they recommended caps and ribands with an air of so much importance, that I wished to ask them how long they had left off wearing them.

I have just had my hair dressed. You can't think how oddly my head feels, full of powder and black pins, and a great cushion on the top of it. I believe you would hardly know me, for my face looks quite different to what it did before my hair was dressed. When I shall be able to make use of a comb for myself I can't tell, for my hair is so much entangled, *frizzled* they call it, that I fear it will be difficult. Adieu, my dear sir; pray excuse the wretched stuff I write; perhaps I may improve by being in the town, and then my letters will be less unworthy your reading. Meantime, I am your dutiful and affectionate, though unpolished,

EVELINA.

Poor Miss Mirvan cannot wear one of the caps she made [A description of the making of these caps was written from Howard Grove], because they dressed her hair too large for them.

The whole letter down to the postscript is done to the life. It is just what a girl in Evelina's position would have written, and nobody can read it without pleasure. The next event is a ball, where Evelina has experiences at once terrible and delightful. The description of this ball is one of the best things in the book, and were it only a little shorter, I should like to transcribe it whole. I cannot deny

myself the pleasure of giving some lengthy extracts from it:—

We past a most extraordinary evening. A *private* ball this was called, so I expected to have seen about four or five couples; but lord! my dear sir, I believe I saw half the world!

The gentlemen, as they passed and re-passed, looked as if they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they sauntered about in a careless and indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in suspense. I don't speak of this in regard to Miss Mirvan and myself only, but to the ladies in general; and I thought it so provoking, that I determined in my own mind, that far from humouring such airs, I would rather not dance at all than with any one who should seem to think me ready to accept the first partner who would condescend to take me. Not long after, a young man, who had for some time looked at us with a kind of negligent impertinence, advanced on tiptoe towards me; he had a set smile on his face, and his dress was so foppish, that I really believe he even wished to be stared at, and yet he was very ugly. Bowing almost to the ground with a sort of swing, and waving his hand with the greatest conceit, after a short and silly pause, he said, "Madam, may I presume?"—and stopt, offering to take my hand. I drew it back, but could scarce forbear laughing. "Allow me, madam," continued he, affectedly breaking off every half moment, "the honour and happiness, if I am not so unhappy as to address you too late—to have the honour and happiness—" Again he would have taken my hand, but bowing my head I begged to be excused, and turned to Miss Mirvan, to conceal my laughter. He then desired to know if I had already engaged myself to some more fortunate man?—I said no, and that I believed I should not dance at all. He would keep himself, he told me, disengaged, in hopes I should relent; and then, uttering some ridiculous speeches of sorrow and disappointment, though his face still wore the same invariable smile, he retreated.

While the ugly fop is away, a very different man approaches her:—

Very soon after, another gentleman, who seemed about six and twenty years old, gaily but not foppishly dressed, and, indeed, extremely handsome, with an air of mixed politeness and gallantry, desired to know if I was engaged, or would honour him with my hand. So he was pleased to say, though I am sure I know not what honour he could receive from me; but these sort of expressions I find are used as words of course, without any distinction of persons, or study of propriety. Well, I bowed, and I am sure I coloured, for, indeed, I was frightened at the thought of dancing before so many people, all strangers, and which was worse, *with* a stranger; however, that was unavoidable; for though I looked round the room several times, I could

not see one person that I knew. And so he took my hand, and led me to join in the dance. He seemed to be very desirous of entering into conversation with me; but I was seized with such a panic, that I could scarcely speak a word, and nothing but the shame of so soon changing my mind prevented my returning to my seat, and declining to dance at all.

Soon she learns that this delightful and handsome person is Lord Orville, and her terror is increased tenfold by the discovery that she has been dancing with a nobleman. She runs away and hides when he wants her for a second dance, and on being pursued and discovered by him, plunges into a very quagmire of confusion, in which, as it appears to herself, she perpetrates every possible outrage upon good breeding. She can only explain her partner's apparent satisfaction in the ill-mannered girl who has fallen to his lot, by referring it to the superiority of his own breeding:—

These people in high life have too much presence of mind, I believe, to *seem* disconcerted or out of humour, however they may feel; for had I been the person of the most consequence in the room, I could not have met with more attention and respect.

The attentions of Lord Orville bring upon her the persecutions of the ugly fop. It appears to have been the old-fashioned etiquette for a lady either to accept the first partner who offered, or to abstain altogether from dancing; and Evelina discovered that she had broken the law of the ball-room:—

We were sitting [Evelina and Lord Orville], he conversing with all gaiety, I looking down with all foolishness, when that fop, who had first asked me to dance, with a most ridiculous solemnity approached, and, after a profound bow or two, said, "I humbly beg pardon, madam, and of you, too, my lord, for breaking in upon such agreeable conversation, which must doubtless be more delectable than what I have to offer; but . . ." I interrupted him—I blush for my folly—with laughing; yet I could not help it; for, added to the man's foppishness (and he actually took snuff between every three words), when I looked round at Lord Orville, I saw such extreme surprise in his face, the cause of which appeared so absurd, that I could not for my life preserve my gravity. I had not laughed before from the time I had left Miss Mirvan, and I had much better have cried then; Lord Orville actually stared at me; the beau, I know not his name, looked quite enraged.

This unseemly fit of laughter involves Evelina in a series of troubles. The discomfited beau accuses her openly of ill-

manners, and Lord Orville, though he defends her at the time with chivalrous warmth, is afterwards heard expressing his opinion that she is a "poor, weak girl, either ignorant or mischievous." This is said to Sir Clement Willoughby, "a bold, bad man," who is also smitten with Evelina. He takes it as an assurance that Lord Orville does not think of her with serious intentions, and draws therefrom confidence for his own suit. Lord Orville's opinion is repeated to Evelina; under its influence London loses all charm for her, and she writes to her guardian:

I care not how soon we leave town. London soon grows tiresome. I wish the captain would come. Mrs. Mirvan talks of the opera for this evening; however, I am very indifferent to it.

But when she has been to the opera she changes her mind again, and wishes "the opera was every night." Then Captain Mirvan arrives, and she is disappointed in another sense:—

Captain Mirvan has arrived. I have not spirits to give an account of his introduction, for he has really shocked me. I do not like him. He seems to be surly, vulgar, disagreeable. Almost the same moment that Maria [his daughter] was presented to him, he began some rude jests upon the bad shape of her nose, and called her a tall, ill-formed thing. She bore it with the utmost good humor; but that kind and sweet-tempered woman, Mrs. Mirvan, deserved a better lot. I am amazed she would marry him. For my own part I have been so shy that I have hardly spoken to him, or he to me. I cannot imagine why the family was so rejoiced at his return. If he had spent his whole life abroad, I should have supposed they might rather have been thankful than sorrowful. However, I hope they do not think so ill of him as I do. At least I am sure they have too much prudence to make it known.

There follow a succession of plays and operas, and evenings at the Ridotto and Ranelagh, with incidents of the same character as those of the first ball. Evelina is admired by everybody, and especially beset by her three conquests of the first evening, Lord Orville, Sir Clement Willoughby, and the ugly fop with the ridiculous manners. But the great event of the visit to town is an accidental meeting with Madame Duval, who has at last succeeded in getting to London. She attaches herself to the Mirvan party, and her outrageous vulgarity is the occasion of a thousand mortifications to Evelina. In describing this woman and her quarrels with Captain Mirvan, Miss Burney

displays a remarkable talent (and rather too much taste) for broad comedy. The thing is extraordinarily well done, but it is over-done. The elaborate practical joke which ends in the poor lady's being dragged out of her carriage by sham highwaymen, and left sitting in a ditch with her hands and feet tied, is a piece of brutality that is altogether out of place. At all times the besetting temptation of Miss Burney was a disposition to construct too many scenes upon one pattern, and at this point the tendency is recklessly indulged. It is here that the reader is a second time in danger of giving up the book in despair of getting out of a circle of apparently pointless incidents. But Madame Duval's relation to Evelina makes her appearance on the scene an event of real moment. She is eager to get her granddaughter into her own keeping, and in order to delay as long as possible this most undesirable consummation, the Mirvan party do all they can to keep her in good humor. She returns with them to Howard Grove, and persuades Lady Howard to write a letter to Sir John Belmont, detailing all the charms of his daughter, and once more inviting him to acknowledge her. Sir John Belmont sends an enigmatical reply, in which nothing is plain but his determination still to repudiate Evelina. Lady Howard and Mr. Villars exchange sentiments appropriate to the occasion, and Evelina is given up to her grandmother, with whom she returns to London for a visit that is to last one month.

The second visit to London, made under auspices so different from the first, gives occasion for a new series of amusing studies of men and manners. While with the Mirvans, Evelina stayed in Queen Anne Street; with Madame Duval, she lodges over a hosier's shop in Holborn, and visits intimately at the home of the Branghtons, tradespeople living at Snow Hill. Mr. Branghton (*père*) is Madame Duval's nephew, and the daughters call Evelina cousin; the son has pretensions to her hand. The familiarity and vulgarity of their manners are insufferable to her:—

Yesterday morning we received an invitation to dine and spend the day at Mr. Branghton's. Young Branghton received us at the door, and the first words he spoke were "Do you know, sisters ain't dressed yet." Then hurrying us into the house, he said to me, "Come, Miss, you shall go up-stairs and catch 'em—I dare say they're at the glass." He would have taken my hand; but I declined this civility,

and begged to follow Madame Duval. Mr. Branghton then appeared, and led the way himself. We went, as before, up two pair of stairs; but the moment the father opened the door, the daughters both gave a loud scream. We all stopped, and then Miss Branghton called out, "Lord, papa, what do you bring the company up here for? Why Polly and I ain't half dressed." "More shame for you," answered he; "here's your aunt and cousin all waiting, and ne'er a room to take them to." "Who'd have thought of their coming so soon?" said she. "I am sure, for my part, I thought Miss was used to nothing but quality hours." "Why, I shan't be ready this half-hour yet," said Miss Polly; "can't they stay in the shop till we're dressed?" . . . The dinner was ill-served, ill-cooked, and ill-managed. The maid who waited had so often to go down-stairs for something that was forgotten, that the Branghtons were perpetually obliged to rise from table themselves, to get plates, knives and forks, bread or beer. Had they been without *pretensions*, all this would have seemed of no consequence; but they aimed at appearing to advantage, and even fancied they succeeded. However, the most disagreeable part of our fare was that the whole family continually disputed whose turn it was to rise and whose to be allowed to sit still.

The Branghtons make up to Evelina because of her good connections, but they are secretly jealous of her, and "spite" her whenever they can. In their company she goes to a ball, and to various places of public entertainment, and sees a new side of life. Flashy young men "beg the favor of hopping a dance with her," and rally her impertinently when she declines. She finds herself the butt of vulgar facetiousness and the victim of coarse practical jokes. And more than once when she has got into a compromising situation, she has to blush at an encounter with Lord Orville and Sir Clement Willoughby. Both are naturally surprised to find the charming and well-bred Miss Anville in such questionable company, and the difference in the character of the two men is shown in their behavior to her. Lord Orville treats her with perfect courtesy and consideration, though he cannot conceal his surprise at the change in her circumstances; the baronet takes advantage of her position to press his unwelcome gallantries upon her. The Branghtons are dazzled by this connection with a lord and a baronet, and their eagerness to make the most of it brings about the crucial dilemma of the book. The whole party are walking in Kensington Gardens, when Evelina perceives Lord Orville, and does her best to keep out of his sight. But a heavy shower drives

them out of the gardens, and they take shelter in a shop, where they find two footmen, whose livery Evelina recognizes as that of Lord Orville. She whispers to her cousins not to call her by her name, explaining that she does not want to be discovered by these men. But the Branghtons take another view of the situation. The ladies are enchanted with the romance and splendor of it; young Branghton thinks it may be turned to practical profit:—

"Goodness then," cried young Branghton, "if I was Miss, if I would not make free with his Lordship's coach, to take me to town."

The suggestion is taken up by Madame Duval, and after a long altercation, during which his lordship's lackeys are first insolent and then servile, a message is despatched to Lord Orville, asking in Miss Anville's name for the use of the carriage. A finely ceremonious permission is granted, and the family drive to Holborn in a coronetted coach. This distressing affair has a yet more distressing sequel. The Branghtons having set down Madame Duval and Evelina at the hosiery, insist that the carriage shall take them on to Snow Hill, and in the course of the further journey, Lord Orville's coach runs into a cart, and suffers serious injuries. And next day young Branghton tells Evelina that he has called on Lord Orville to apologize in her name, and that her friend is most affable and quite satisfied. Evelina, in dismay, writes a letter of humblest apology to Lord Orville; and the letter is intercepted by Sir Clement Willoughby, who replies to it (using Lord Orville's name) in terms of extravagant rapture and impertinent compliment. The description of Evelina's feelings as she reads this letter is one of the best things, not of a purely comic character, the book contains:—

The moment the letter was delivered to me, I retired to my own room to read it: and so eager was my first perusal, that—I am ashamed to own—it gave me no sensation but of delight. Unsuspicious of any impropriety from Lord Orville, I perceived not immediately the impertinence it implied. I only marked the expressions of his own regard; and I was so much surprised that I was unable for some time to compose myself or read it again. I could only walk up and down the room, repeating to myself, "Good God, is it possible?—am I then loved by Lord Orville?" But this dream was soon over, and I awoke to far different feelings. Upon a second reading, I thought every word changed—it did not seem the same letter. I could not find one sentence

that I could look at without blushing; my astonishment was extreme, and it was succeeded by the utmost indignation.

The cup of mortification is now full to overflowing, and, thankful that the term of her visit has expired, Evelina returns to Berry Hill and, bit by bit, tells all her troubles to the good Mr. Villars.

During the visit to Holborn, a new and important thread has been woven into the story. Evelina has become the benefactress of a young Scotchman, calling himself Macartney, who lodged in the same house with her. She found him in despair, brought on by poverty and a disastrous love affair of which he confided the story to her. After growing up in retirement with his mother, who suffered from an incurable melancholy consequent upon the loss of his father shortly before his birth, he had made a visit to Paris at the age of twenty-one, and there fallen in love with an exceedingly beautiful girl, the daughter of an Englishman of distinction. Her father being absent, and her only guardian an old nurse, who regarded him with favor, Macartney was able to pay his suit very happily. But suddenly the father came back, and threatened to turn him out of the house. A violent scene ensued:—

In vain his daughter pleaded—in vain did I, repentant of my anger, retract—his reproaches continued: myself, my country, were loaded with infamy, till, no longer constraining my rage, we fought—and he fell.

Macartney fled from Paris, and made his way home to Scotland, where he told the whole story to his mother, who on hearing the name of the girl's father, and the apparently fatal end of the quarrel, cried, "My son, you have then murdered your father."

Now this father, whose name Macartney does not reveal to Evelina, is no other than Sir John Belmont; the old servant is Evelina's first nurse, Bessie Green, and the young lady is Bessie Green's daughter, who has been palmed off upon Sir John Belmont as his own child, and whom he has carefully trained in atonement for the wrong done to the unhappy Lady Belmont whom he supposes to be her mother. All these things come to light in the course of a visit Evelina pays to a friend at Bath, where the principal actors in the story are gathered together for the *dénouement*. There Lord Orville reappears as a guest—charming as ever—in the same house where Evelina stays. Macartney haunts the garden-

gates with letters of thanks to his benefactress, and gives rise to uncomfortable jealousies on the part of his lordship. And last, but not least, Sir John Belmont arrives to drink the waters, accompanied by Bessie Green's daughter, who is pointed out as Miss Belmont to the astonished Evelina.

There are some scenes of high heroics, with some more character scenes interspersed. Evelina is introduced to Sir John Belmont, who is immediately convinced by her striking likeness to her dead mother. And then all goes easily to the end. The crafty nurse confesses her fraud; Macartney learns that his sweetheart is not his sister after all; Lord Orville knows that his dreaded rival is only a brother of his bride; Sir Clement Willoughby betrays that he wrote the impertinent letter; and Evelina becomes the happiest of women.

Miss Burney's second book is distinguished from her first by all the differences that are natural between the work of a shy girl who doubts her powers and fears publicity even while she seeks it, and that of a woman whose right to publish has been unimpeachably established. "Cecilia" is by far the better book of the two. It has no faults of taste, such as occur here and there in "Evelina," and it has fewer faults of redundancy. It is more ably constructed, and shows a deeper grasp of character, as well as a wider knowledge of life. It has a great many more personages, and the shades of their characters are more subtly graduated and contrasted. Above all, the situation has more of serious human interest. The plot is not, as in "Evelina," a mere maze of circumstances to be threaded by the author's ingenuity, but a natural outcome of the characters acting in the story. On the other hand, Cecilia the heroine is a much less engaging person than Evelina the heroine. She is entirely discreet, well-bred, and virtuous, and we are duly interested in her fate from the first chapter to the last. But she wants the charm of *naïve* girlhood that makes Evelina delightful and lovable. Cecilia is too wise to be very attractive, and she suffers a further disadvantage from the colder position given to her in the book. In writing her second novel, Miss Burney dropped the epistolary form she had used in her first, and presented all her characters objectively. The change gave her greater freedom for treatment of her scenes of active comedy, but it deprived her of

some favorite means of displaying the serious sides of her characters; and naturally her heroine suffered most from this deprivation. The new form also told injuriously upon Miss Burney's writing; another point in which "Cecilia" is less good than "Evelina." It obliged her to trust less to the colloquial vein in which she excelled, and to attempt more ambitious styles that were beyond her strength. The consequence was that she fell into mannerisms, and labored pedantically to produce stilted effects. These faults were further developed in her later books, until they resulted in an insufferable jargon. But in "Cecilia," though they must already be called blemishes, they are not bad enough to spoil the book materially.

At the beginning of the story Cecilia Beverley has just entered upon her twenty-first year. As she is an heiress, the time is momentous:—

Her ancestors had been rich farmers in the county of Suffolk, though her father, in whom a spirit of elegance had supplanted the rapacity of wealth, had spent his time as a private country gentleman, satisfied, without increasing his store, to live upon what he inherited from the labors of his predecessors. She had lost him in early youth, and her mother had not long survived him. They had bequeathed to her £10,000, and consigned her to the care of the Dean of —, her uncle. With this gentleman, in whom, by various contingencies, the possessions of a rising and prosperous family were centred, she had passed the last four years of her life: and a few weeks had yet elapsed since his death, which, by depriving her of her last relation, made her heiress to an estate of £3,000 per annum, with no other restriction than that of annexing her name, if she married, to the disposal of her hand and riches.

Let the reader keep firm hold on this condition of the will, for the whole plot turns upon it. Miss Beverley's future was confided by her uncle the dean to three trustees: Mr. Harrel, a young man of fashion, married to the dearest friend of Cecilia's girlhood, to which accident he owes his appointment to the trust; Mr. Briggs, a City man of the commonest, not to say the coarsest, manners, whose miserly character is counted on to counteract the extravagant dispositions of the fashionable Harrel; and the Honorable Mr. Delville, of Delville Castle, a most magnificent and pompous personage, who is perpetually at a loss to understand why his friend, the dean, has selected him for an office which subjects him to the annoyance of having to co-operate with persons in an inferior social position, besides

making demands upon his time, which, as the time of a man of good family, should not be lightly tampered with. In addition to the guardianship of these three trustees, Miss Beverley enjoys the protection of two old friends, Mr. Monckton and Mrs. Charlton. Mr. Monckton is the younger son of another good family, a man in middle life, married to an old woman of fortune and rank. He looks forward to the death of his wife, and intends to console himself, when the time comes, by espousing Cecilia and her fortune. Lady Catherine Monckton quite appreciates her husband's character, and regards Cecilia with little favor. Cecilia, who is a paragon of virtue and amiability, regrets, without understanding it, the coldness and rudeness of her friend's wife; but not suspecting its cause, sets it down to a general sourness of temper, and never allows it to interfere with the filial confidence she places in Mr. Monckton himself. She reveres him as fully as Evelina revered Mr. Villars, and repeatedly gives thanks to Heaven for having bestowed upon her the inestimable blessing of such a friend. Mrs. Charlton is simply a kind old lady who becomes useful towards the end of the book.

Cecilia takes up her abode with the Harrels, and anticipates much happiness in renewing relations with her early friend. She is, however, much disappointed. Mrs. Harrel has become fashionable and worldly: she has no time for friendship, and, as Cecilia discovers, no qualities to make her friendship worth having. Mr. Harrel is a desperate gambler, and before long it becomes plain to Cecilia that the pair are on the verge of ruin. The house is beset by creditors, and Cecilia is moved by Harrel's threats of suicide to advance money to meet his liabilities. Her generosity once proved, new appeals are continually made to it; and at last, having got from her all the money she has in her actual possession, they make her borrow from a Jew on the security of her paternal fortune. Again, let the reader beware of skipping — this transaction is the cause of frightful complications later on. But no help can avert Mr. Harrel's destruction. He plays more and more desperately, and at last carries out the threat so often made, and shoots himself. The scene at Vauxhall which terminates in this catastrophe is Miss Burney's masterpiece. But before giving some extracts from it, I must introduce some of the minor characters who take part in it.

First in officiousness, and therefore in usefulness to the author, but not otherwise of much importance, is Mr. Morrice,

a young lawyer, who, though rising in his profession, owed his success neither to distinguished abilities nor to skill-supplying industry, but to the art of uniting suppleness to others with confidence in himself. To a reverence of rank, talents, and fortune the most profound, he joined an assurance in his own merit which no superiority could depress; and with a presumption which encouraged him to aim at all things, he blended a good humor that no mortification could lessen.

Throughout the book Morrice plays the double part of catspaw and marplot. He is always putting one person out in order to oblige another. Just now he shall be useful, with the help of Miss Larolles (a young lady who explains herself), in introducing Mr. Meadows, a languid leader of the *ton*. Morrice asks:—

"Pray, what is that gentleman's name? it's deuced hard to make him hear one."

"His name is Meadows," said Miss Larolles, in a low voice, "and I assure you sometimes he won't hear people by the hour together. He's so excessive absent you've no notion. One day he made me so mad, that I could not help crying; and Mr. Sawyer was standing by the whole time! and I assure you I believe he laughed at me. Only conceive how distressing!"

"May be," said Morrice, "it is bashfulness; perhaps he thinks we shall cut him up."

"Bashfulness!" repeated Miss Larolles; "Lord, you don't conceive the thing at all. Why he's at the very head of the *ton*. There's nothing in the world so fashionable as taking no notice of things, and never seeing people, and saying nothing at all, and never hearing a word, and not knowing one's own acquaintance, and always finding fault. All the *ton* do so, and I assure you as to Mr. Meadows, he's so excessively courted by everybody, that, if he does but say a syllable, he thinks it such an immense favor, you've no idea."

Another variety of fashionable affectation is represented by Mr. Aresby, a captain of militia, who interlards his conversation with French words, and is *abîmé* and *assommé* at every turn. Then there is the haughty and supercilious Sir Robert Floyer, from whom Mr. Harrel has borrowed money on the security, so to speak, of Cecilia's hand and heart, and Mr. Mariott, with whom he has played the same game. All these, and some more, who must be left to explain themselves, are assembled at Vauxhall on the fatal night.

When they entered Vauxhall, Mr. Harrel endeavored to dismiss his moroseness, and

affecting his usual gaiety, struggled to recover his spirits; but the effort was vain, he could neither talk nor look like himself; and though from time to time he resumed his air of wonted levity, he could not support it, but drooped and hung his head in evident despondency. He made several turns in the midst of the company, and walked so fast that they could hardly keep pace with him, as if he hoped by exercise to restore his vivacity; but every attempt failed, he sunk and grew sadder, and muttering between his teeth, "This is not to be borne!" he hastily called to a waiter to bring him a bottle of champagne. Of this he drank glass after glass, notwithstanding Cecilia, as Mrs. Harrel had not courage to speak, entreated him to forbear. He seemed, however, not to hear her; but when he had drunk what he thought necessary to revive him, he conveyed them into an unfrequented part of the garden, and as soon as they were out of sight of all but a few stragglers, he suddenly stopped, and, in great agitation, said, "My chaise will soon be ready, and I shall take of you a long farewell! All my affairs are unpropitious to my speedy return; the wine is now mounting to my head, and perhaps I may not be able to say much by-and-bye. I fear I have been cruel to you, Priscilla [his wife], and I begin to wish I had spared you this parting scene; yet let it not be banished your remembrance, but think of it when you are tempted to such mad folly as has ruined us."

He then turns from his weeping wife and addresses Cecilia in terms of fervent admiration and gratitude. Their conversation is interrupted by the arrival of Mr. Mariott, who alludes threateningly to the promise Harrel has made in regard to Cecilia. Harrel puts him off, and asks him to sup with him. The obliging Morrice, turning up at the moment, is commissioned to find a convenient box for the party. While he is away on this errand creditors of another stamp begin to appear:—

A fat, sleek, vulgar-looking man, dressed in a bright purple coat, with a deep red waistcoat, and a wig bulging far from his head with small round curls, while his plump face and person announced plenty and good living, and an air of defiance spoke the fulness of his purse, strutted up to Mr. Harrel, and accosting him in a manner that showed some diffidence of his reception, but none of his right, said, "Sir, your humble servant," and made a bow, first to him, and then to the ladies.

This is Hobson, the builder, who has a large bill against Harrel. He is beginning to make himself disagreeable, when he is joined and rebuked by Simpkins the hosier:—

A little, mean-looking man, very thin, and almost bent double with perpetual cringing,

came up to Mr. Hobson, and, pulling him by the sleeve, whispered, yet loud enough to be heard, "It's surprisable to me, Mr. Hobson, you can behave so out of the way! For my part, perhaps, I've as much my due as another person, but I dares to say I shall have it when it's convenient, and I'd scorn for to mislest a gentleman when he's taking his pleasure."

"Lord bless me," cried Mrs. Harrel, "what shall we do now? Here's all Mr. Harrel's creditors coming upon us!"

"Do?" cried Mr. Harrel, re-assuming an air of gaiety, "why, give them all a supper to be sure. Come, gentlemen, will you favor me with your company to supper?"

Hobson and Simpkins accept the unexpected invitation, and at the moment Morrice returns to say, that, so far, he has not been able to procure a box, the gardens are too full:—

"But I hope we shall get one for all that; for I observed one of the best boxes in the gardens, just to the right there, with nobody in it but that gentleman who made me spill the teapot at the Pantheon [this is Mr. Meadows]. So I made an apology, and told him the case; but he only said, humph? and hay? so then I told it him all over again. However I could get nothing from him but just that *humph?* and *hay?* but he is so remarkably absent, that I dare say if we all go and sit round him, he won't know a word of the matter."

"Won't he?" cried Mr. Harrel; "have at him then." And he followed Mr. Morrice, though Cecilia, who now half expected that all was to end in a mere idle frolic, warmly joined her remonstrances to those of Mrs. Harrel, which were made with the utmost, but with futile, earnestness.

Mr. Meadows's sense of what is due to the ladies overcomes his distinguished absence of mind, and he makes way for them. He is of course invited to partake of the supper, and in time the whole incongruous party settle down. Captain Aresby presently passes by, and is asked to join them. And finally Sir Robert Floyer comes to demand justice of Harrel. The conversation at table is most amusing, but in this extraordinary scene the element of amusement is subordinated throughout to the feeling of the catastrophe that is impending. The narrative is more rapid and nervous than usual; Miss Burney's habitual tendency to excess is kept in check by her eagerness to get to the catastrophe, and this concentration gives unusual vividness to her characters. The affections of the fine gentlemen and the vulgarities of the shopkeepers; the ludicrous impression produced by each upon the other; the helpless silliness of

Mrs. Harrel and the desperate gaiety of Harrel himself, all gather intensity from the sense of coming horror; and Cecilia herself, who, as the only person fully alive to the ghastly significance of the situation, becomes the central figure of the group, is more personally interesting than at any other point of the story. The scene is admirable throughout, but it is impossible to quote further from it here.

After the death of Harrel, Cecilia goes to live with the Delvilles. She has already made their acquaintance, and a mutual, though unrecognized attachment has sprung up between her and the son of the house. It is now that the serious love story begins, and the condition of the dean's will makes itself felt. The London season is over, and the family remove to their country-seat, taking Cecilia with them. At Delville Castle she first understands the nature of her feeling for young Mortimer Delville, and learns that he returns her affection. She is much assisted in these discoveries by Lady Honoria Pemberton, an exceedingly amusing and pleasant character, who plays an important part in the second half of the book. Lady Honoria is the daughter of a duke, and as such receives from Mr. Delville a respect which she herself does not award to the honors of her own or any other family. She is good-natured and good-hearted, but, above all, flippant and audacious. Her mischievous vagaries relieve the dulness of life at the castle, and supply the amount of fun necessary to save the reader from wearying of Cecilia's conscientious virtue and Mortimer's heroics. The situation has by this time become exceedingly painful. That the name of Delville is too sacred to be bartered for the wealth of Cræsus, is felt alike by father, mother, and son. But apart from the cruel conditions of the will, Mrs. Delville would rather have Cecilia for daughter-in-law than any woman in the world. Moreover, Mortimer's passion for her is destroying his health. Separation becomes necessary to the peace of both parties, and Cecilia leaves Delville Castle and, after a little interval, takes refuge with good Mrs. Charlton. And here we realize with what elaborate care and forethought Miss Burney designed all her incidents and characters. Mrs. Charlton is a person of so little individuality that she seemed at first a mere piece of padding. But at this point she becomes indispensable to the further progress of the story. So far Cecilia has been a paragon of dignity and conscien-

tiousness. She has sacrificed love to duty, and passion to pride. But in the moment when she flies from Delville Castle, the crowning act of her virtue, she enters upon a different course. Not consciously or deliberately by any means; but having taken up her abode with Mrs. Charlton she seeks advice and sympathy of her, and gets a little encouragement for the human weakness she has hitherto suppressed. It would take too long to follow all the ins and outs of this part of the plot, and I dare make no more long quotations, though it is hard to pass over the scene on the London Road, where Cecilia and Mrs. Charlton, rushing to town to meet Mortimer and explain a terrible misunderstanding about a secret marriage he has proposed, fall in with a dozen old acquaintances of Cecilia's who cause her the most excruciating embarrassments. Mr. Meadows outdoes himself on this occasion, and Miss Larolles suffers a most amusing martyrdom. Captain Aresby is "*abîmé* to the greatest degree," and Mr. Morrice gets into everybody's bad book.

The secret marriage is interrupted by an agent of Mr. Monckton; and later on the story of Cecilia's dealings with the Jew is brought up against her by the same enemy. Mr. Delville, to whom it is maliciously confided, makes use of it to insult her with a proposal he knows her to be incapable of consenting to, because it involves the production of her father's fortune intact. Upon which Mrs. Delville, who has been at the point of death, takes part with the lovers, and abets a marriage made without the consent of her husband. But the name of Delville is not sacrificed; it is Cecilia, on the contrary, who gives up her fortune. And the book ends with this quaint passage:—

The upright mind of Cecilia, her purity, her virtue, and the moderation of her wishes, gave to her in the warm affection of Lady Delisle [deaths have occurred in the family and changed old titles to new] and the unremitting fondness of Mortimer, all the happiness human life seems capable of receiving; yet human it was, and as such imperfect; she knew that, at times, the whole family must murmur at her loss of fortune, and at times she murmured herself to be thus portionless, though an HEIRESS. Rationally, however, she surveyed the world at large, and finding that of the few who had any happiness, there were none without some misery, she checked the sigh of repining mortality, and, grateful for general felicity, bore partial evil with cheerfulest resignation.

"Cheerfulest resignation" is an im-

portant note in Miss Burney's personal memoirs. It was a virtue of which she had much need, and which she practised to perfection; and if we were forced to ascribe a purpose to her books, it would perhaps be true to say, that she aimed at promoting this mood in others, by showing how much entertainment may be got out of the trivial worries over which it is common to lose temper, and by creating interest in men and women whose qualities are not intrinsically interesting. She is sometimes accused of being superficial, because she dares so little in the direction of the stronger and deeper passions and interests of human nature. But this criticism is itself superficial: the truer word for her is *reserved*. She shut the door upon the whole range of bold speculation and unconventional feeling, because she considered these things unfit for the novelist, and especially for the female novelist to treat of. But her own feelings were deep, and her own interests and sympathies were wide; and in drawing her characters, though she seldom attempts to paint much—save in conventional outline—that goes below the surface, she yet shows at all times, by the firmness and consistency of her creations, that she possessed the root of the matter in understanding, if not in creative power and courage of execution. And, indeed, there are so few who have the power to succeed in the highest regions of imaginative romance, that when an author achieves admirable results upon the lower plains, it is wiser to rejoice than to regret that the dangerous heights have not been attempted. In the case of Miss Burney, it is certain that what is lost in boldness of conception is gained in excellence of workmanship, and that the patient industry she bestowed upon constructing plots suited to the play of the talents of which she was an easy mistress, would have been ill exchanged for vain efforts to express the deeper things which overstrain all but the strongest genius before they can find adequate expression in fiction.

I have purposely given very little space to comment and a great deal to quotation: believing that the best recommendation of Miss Burney is found in Miss Burney herself. Besides, so much has already been written on the subject, that there is really nothing new to say; as was recognized by Dr. Johnson, when Susan Thrale was making her *début* in society, and he laughingly advised her, if she wished to be original, to find fault with "Cecilia." The vocabulary of praise had already

been exhausted in the matter, and of what was said then, so much has come down to us in the "Diary and Letters," and been quite lately transcribed from thence into the prefaces of these new editions of the novels, that to go over it again would be the vainest of vain repetitions.

MARY ELIZABETH CHRISTIE.

From Temple Bar.

AU PAIR.

CHAPTER I.

A LITTLE one-horse carriage, very rickety, very steep to climb into, was jingling its way along the road from Orthez to Sauveterre. There was much fuss in its progress, the bells on the horse's collar shook, the wheels rattled, the drag was loose and made a discordant noise, but for all that the pace was not very great.

There were two occupants of this uncomfortable vehicle, a young lady and a gentleman, and a small trunk was strapped on behind, betraying the fact that they were travellers.

"It seems a very long way, Dick," said the girl restlessly; "I had no idea that it was so far. And the country is very disappointing," she added with a little sigh.

"There is not much to be seen yet, dear," he answered; "but from Sauveterre we are to see the Pyrenees. Always impatient, Nellie!"

"I am not exactly impatient, Dick," she answered; "I am tormented with fancies. If I have not done right after all! if this governess's place turns out a failure, and it is a very long way from you and Aunt Mary," with a little sob.

"Oh, my dear little cousin," cried Dick, taking her hand in both his, "you make me too miserable; is it not your own doing? have not I implored you almost on my knees to give it up? Has my mother left anything unsaid to persuade you to make Holmedale your home? and you did nothing but go on with all that pretty nonsense of yours about being independent. How can a beautiful child like you, ever be independent? You must be looked after, and taken care of, wherever you go, and yet you preferred throwing yourself on the kindness of utter strangers, to remaining with your nearest of kin and leading the life of a princess with all of us for your slaves."

"Dick, dear, I am almost sorry now."

"Sorry? well, then, not a step farther will we go! you shall go back with me!"

Oh Nellie, Nellie, only say the word and back we go at once."

"Impossible!" she said. Then, suddenly shaking her head, and smiling through irrepressible tears, she went on, "They would sue me for breach of contract! besides, being sorry that I came, does not make me wish to go back."

"Does it not?" said Dick, releasing her hand, and turning away his face to conceal his disappointment.

"No, no, Dick, you poor dear old boy," said Nellie with that kind of patronizing, affectionate kindness very young ladies are apt to use towards their cousins; "all my reasons for accepting this situation were so admirable that it would be very highly unreasonable to discard them now."

"It would be the first reasonable thing you ever did in your life," said Dick bitterly. He was a tall, strapping fellow about thirty, with somewhat irregular features, his want of beauty redeemed by the honest, frank expression of a well-shaped mouth, and wonderfully kindly eyes. He wasted the strong love of his heart on this bright, fanciful girl who, being extremely romantic and with a gilded imagination, had yet all the want of sympathy of extreme youth.

Poor Dick! how fain would he have taken her away with him, back to the safe shelter of his own lovely old Berkshire farm, where, as he fondly imagined, everything existed to make the life of his young wife a paradise; he was wealthy enough to make farming (to her at least) Arcadian, asking nothing more of her than to share his love for his magnificent Clydesdales, his grand shorthorns, not even aspiring to the smallest sympathy for the black Berkshire pigs, so precious as to be numbered as kings only expect to be. Sally the Fourteenth and Betty the Twelfth were unique! Dick Gordon had not been brought up to do without sympathy; his mother, who lived with him, had one of those large, loving natures that influence everything and every one with whom they come in contact. A very clever woman also, capable, managing, full of tact. She also was very fond of Nellie Grey, the only child of her brother, and when at seventeen the little orphan was left all alone in her dingy London home, Mrs. Gordon hastened to bring her to Holmedale and be to her as loving and a thousand times more motherly than her own dead mother had been.

Nellie had been brought up in London; her father had been a fashionable London

doctor, and had at one time made much money, but with affluence came imprudence; he speculated, hoping to treble what he possessed, and failed: when he died, nothing was left for Nellie, not even enough to pay for her black gowns.

The girl's life had been a very happy, if somewhat neglected one; she had had masters for all the usual accomplishments, spoke French and German with facility, played the piano rather incorrectly, and sang charmingly; no one superintended her reading, and she read every novel that she could get hold of—fortunately those that her father's house contained were not harmful, but of a very romantic order, and Nellie's mind was full of castles in the air, wonderful ideal heroes, and strange adventures.

Her first experience of real love in real life was her cousin Dick's attachment, which he concealed for a time so effectively that had she not been enlightened by her friend, the vicar's pretty daughter, she would never have found it out.

Could anything be less romantic, more odiously commonplace than to marry such a man as Dick—a man with such a close-cropped head, such a thick, rough moustache, and who was not in the least fond of poetry?

Nellie hated Holmedale; she was horribly afraid of the horses and cows, always thought that Dick would be thrown when he went out hunting, and could not be got to like walks in the fields or ploughed land; she was a born cockney, and country life had no charms for her. When Mrs. Gordon realized that her son had really given away his heart's love to Nellie Grey, she felt as if her own heart would break; no sorrow that she had endured herself seemed to her heavier than that of foreseeing the inevitable pain that must come to her boy; yet she said to him no word of remonstrance, she knew too well the utter uselessness of such a course; but she set herself to study Nellie's character, to try and develop her really excellent qualities, and to bring them to the surface. But poor little Nellie did not want to be taken *au sérieux* as yet—she wanted to wait and enjoy herself and dream of an ideal future, and escape from the deadly monotony of beautiful Holmedale. She found the opportunity at last. A friend of her early days, a Miss Graham, was a strong-minded woman; she wrote to her frequently, urging her not to allow herself to become a dependant on her aunt's kindness, but to strike out a line for herself, gain her own bread,

see something of the world. These letters, combined with her extreme longing for variety, made Nellie search the advertisement sheets of the *Times* daily, with a hope of finding something which would exactly meet with her wishes. It came at last, a rather unusual advertisement, but which took her fancy:—

On demande une Institutrice anglaise, munie de bons renseignements, au pair; s'adresser à Madame la Harpe, Sauveterre.

Nellie did what was not right: she answered the advertisement, obtained recommendations from old friends in London, and not till the whole thing was arranged did she tell her aunt.

Mrs. Gordon was much disturbed, grieved, and displeased with what she had done, but unable to resist the coaxing, pleading ways and kisses of the culprit. She consented to let her go, after satisfying herself by very careful inquiries that the French lady who advertised was all that could be wished, and she was not without a secret hope that Nellie might learn in the house of strangers to appreciate the happy home she was so ready to sacrifice.

Dick Gordon accompanied her on her journey, much to his own inconvenience, in the busy spring-tide of the year, but to the last he cherished a hope that she might repent and let him take her back again.

The little carriage jingled on, crossing, one after another, long, vine-covered, low hills, always rising and falling with about the same unvaried view—now they passed through a village, now again dipped into a valley and up once more; vine-clad hills are more profitable than picturesque, the straight, monotonous lines destroy the beauty of the landscape.

Nellie grew paler and paler, and by-and-by she put out a cold little hand for Dick to take and hold; she felt great comfort and strength in his warm, strong clasp, and she wanted comfort like a child, and sought for it without a thought of the cruel pain she was inflicting, for Dick, with the intuitive perception of his sympathetic nature, understood the silent appeal and took it for what it was worth.

As the road rose over the last hill, and reached the end of the series, the hills stopped, and, as it were, rolled back to right and left, and they stood on a kind of high plateau, while a glorious view broke upon them.

Nestled on the hillside lay Sauveterre, bounded in by a terrace-wall; far below, a

deep valley fringed with trees, at the bottom of which, amid stones and rocks and boulders of granite, rushed the river Gave; behind, the low, vine-covered hills; in front, all middle distances swept away, and a wondrous vision standing out in the clear air—the grand range of the Pyrenees, while framed in by the branches of an old chestnut-tree which hung over the road, seeming almost like a cloud in the air, rose the snow-clad Pic du Midi.

Neither of the travellers spoke for a moment—then Nellie turned and said breathlessly,—

"Oh! Dick, is it not beautiful?"

But Dick did not answer; his eyes were fixed on the far distance, and there was a strange, yearning look in them, solemn, intensely sad. Had an intuition come to him, all indefinite as yet, that for him also there was no middle distance in life, only a rushing torrent beating itself on the stones, and far away a vision of distant, heavenly hills?

But there was no time for thought; with a tremendous crack of his long-lashed whip, the driver urged his little horse to dash into the stone-paved streets of Sauveterre at full gallop.

CHAPTER II.

"WHERE do monsieur and mademoiselle wish to descend?"

"At the Maison de Mabendie, Madame la Harpe," answered Dick.

"Here we are, monsieur," and the little carriage drew up suddenly before a narrow little street. "Monsieur and mademoiselle must get out here, go along the little street, turn to the left, and before them they will see the Maison de Mabendie. Does monsieur propose to return to Orthez to-night?"

Mr. Gordon looked at his watch. "I must be at Orthez in time to catch the nine o'clock train," he said. "How long will it take you to take me down?"

"Monsieur must not start later than half past six. See, an hour to rest my horses, and monsieur must start."

"Oh Dick, only an hour," said Nellie piteously; she had got out of the carriage and stood beside him trembling.

"An hour is a good long time, Nell," he said, smiling encouragement—he would help her now as much as he could.

The coachman remounted his seat and drove off to the little inn, promising to send round a man with the boxes and small packages in a few moments, and anxious to lose none of the precious moments in which he wished to make him-

self acquainted as much as possible with his cousin's future home, Dick drew her quickly with him down the ill-paved, dirty little street. The approach was unpromising, but ended in a small, open court. The old house which was their destination stood in a beautiful situation on the walls, with a narrow terrace round it, bounded by a low parapet actually overhanging the valley and the river. The valley was half spanned by a very ancient bridge, the middle arches of which had long been swept away, the rest remained, all clothed with ivy and other luxuriant vegetation. In the far distance the wonderful mountains. It would be difficult to find a more lovely situation.

The old house was large and picturesque, carrying on each end the *tourelles*, indispensable attributes of *noblesse*. It was washed all over with yellow-wash of a warm color, concealing the thick stone walls, in many places from three to four feet thick. The narrow terrace was bright with flowers in great earthen jars.

"It is very pretty, Nellie! Come, dear! don't be so frightened!" said Dick, patting her hand, as he rang the bell.

The door flew open, and with a kind of rush, it seemed as if the whole family of La Harpe poured into the courtyard.

Outstretched hands greeted the newcomers, and a torrent of welcoming words.

It seemed as if every face there photographed itself on Dick Gordon's brain, so great was the tension.

Monsieur and Madame la Harpe were both short, both perfectly round. Madame seemed to roll rather than walk, bound rather than turn; very active, very voluble, and in a black gown flashing with jet beads.

Mademoiselle la Harpe, Amélie, was just what her mother must have been at her age, short, plump, rather pretty, with a profusion of frizzy black hair, and too large a face, all *épanouie* with good-nature.

Monsieur Jean the eldest son, and his wife, were of a somewhat different type. Monsieur Jean, *avocat*, thin, pale, bald, and studious. As for Madame Jean, her face was as the face of a pitying saint—so sweet, so good, and so worn. Behind stood two *bonnes*, with rosy faces and bright-colored handkerchiefs, picturesquely tying up their black hair.

It seemed as if they could not make enough of Nellie. They pressed her cousin to stay, but he was obliged to refuse, his presence was urgently wanted at home. They then, all of them, de-

spatched the *bonnes* to prepare some refreshment for him before his departure, and conducted them into the large, cool *salon*. Time was going, flying very fast. Dick at last boldly determined that no more must be lost. He advanced to Monsieur la Harpe and asked to speak to him in private.

But Madame la Harpe had no intention of being excluded from the interview, and she solemnly led the way into another room, followed meekly by her lord and the tall Englishman, who seemed to them almost colossal.

"I have but a very short time," said Dick, in his frank, open way, "but I am most anxious to commend my little cousin to your care — she has no nearer relation than my mother and myself."

Madame la Harpe gave a little wave of her hand. "You may depend upon us," she said. "Her situation with us, *au pair*, makes her in all respects one of ourselves; the advantages my Amélie derives from her, she also will derive from my Amélie, and —"

"Yes, madame," said Dick earnestly, "but I venture to ask even more. She is only seventeen and an orphan. I ask for her your tenderness, your care, your consideration."

Monsieur la Harpe gave his chest such a resounding thump that Dick quite started.

"Faith of a *père de famille*!" he exclaimed. "She shall be as our own child, and with your concurrence, my good sir, I will marry her myself."

Dick started again. Madame la Harpe nodded approvingly.

"But, my friend," she said, "perhaps monsieur intends to marry her himself; it is his right, and as her only male relative, his bounden duty; of course, if he should desire it, I also will do my best."

A confused sense came flitting over Dick's bewildered mind that, like Boaz, as nearest of kin, he had a solemn duty to perform in espousing his cousin; then the absurdity of the notion crossed him, and he could hardly help smiling.

"In England," he said, "it is our habit to let young ladies please themselves about marrying."

"That is a very strange and reprehensible custom," said Madame la Harpe severely.

"*Madame est servie*," said a maid at the door.

"Ah, and there is so little time, and farewells to be said and all!" cried the good father. "Monsieur," with another

portentous slap on the breast, "you may rest contented, we will take every care of our sacred trust. You may put every confidence in me."

"I am sure I can!" said Dick heartily. He read something straightforward and honest in the little man's black, bead-like eyes.

Monsieur la Harpe rose and bowed profoundly, Dick returned the bow; Madame la Harpe courtesied, and Dick repeated his salutation. It was like the seal of some solemn compact. Then she led the way to the dining-room.

If Dick Gordon's healthy English appetite had looked for cold beef, it looked in vain. The repast consisted of a vast omelette salad, bread and fruit, and excellent *vin ordinaire*. Nellie could not eat a mouthful; her eyes were fixed on her cousin as if she would never take them off. The time was going so fast.

Dick Gordon looked again at his watch. "I ought to start for the inn in five minutes," he said. He gave a quick look round at the whole assembled family: his look ended imploringly on Madame Jean. A flash of sympathy passed between them. She rose.

"Let us go, my friends," she said. "Our friends would wish to say their adieux in private; and little demoiselle Nellie must have many messages to send."

"You are quite right," cried all the kind-hearted family, who would never have thought about it themselves, and they all bustled out.

Nellie waited till they were all gone, then she ran up to her cousin and hid her face on his shoulder.

"Oh, Dick, dear Dick," she said. "I have been so wicked, so ungrateful. I have never been half good enough to you, and now you are going away. Oh, Dick! say you forgive me; and give my dear, dear, dearest love to Aunt Mary."

"Forgive you, Nellie? Child, there is nothing to forgive. Nellie, I have never told you — I did not want you to know; but, darling, you are my own heart's love! Hush, hush; I only tell you that you may know that whenever you want a home or — or a friend, a brother or protector, I shall be waiting for you — to welcome you, my little love, and ask nothing — nothing in return."

She was sobbing on his breast.

There came a low knock at the door, and Madame Jean's soft voice, —

"The *voiturier* begs that monsieur will come."

"Dick, Dick! kiss me," cried Nellie almost frantically, for her cousin had wrung her hands and was turning away.

"Good-bye, darling, good-bye."

"Dick, won't you kiss me?" she cried, putting her arms round his neck like a child.

Then he stooped, and kissed her passionately.

"God bless you and help you, Nellie! Good-bye."

He went out. They were all waiting for him outside. How he got through all the salutations, bows, and farewells he could not tell. But it was over at last, and he was once more rapidly driving down the road to Orthez.

Meanwhile Madame Jean stole quietly back to Nellie, and allowed her to sob out her grief and loneliness in her kind arms.

CHAPTER III.

IN a very few days Nellie Grey was quite at home in the Maison de Mabendie, and now the spring days were lengthening, and the sudden summer of the south burst upon them in all its hot splendor.

At first Amélie and Nellie, still somewhat shy of each other, worked well together, alternately at English and French, but by degrees their ardor for study somewhat waned, and as it grew hotter they grew more desultory.

The life was very different to anything to which Nellie had been accustomed, but the facility with which she adapted herself to it was quite astonishing. Sometimes she wondered, with a little start of dismay, what her Aunt Mary would have said if she had seen her in the mornings going about the house in a loose dressing-gown of Pompadour print, with her hair not done, only rolled up over a comb. At first she felt very untidy, but all the others were the same, so she soon began to think it impossible to take the trouble of dressing herself before it was time for the twelve o'clock breakfast. The food at first seemed a little strange: meat was only to be had once a week at Sauveterre. Nobody expected it oftener—not the La Harpes, the wealthiest people in the little town; not the marquis and his Parisienne wife, who came from Paris to spend the summer in their pretty, old château—nobody thought it necessary. The town was full of hens and chickens; eggs abounded, and formed the *pièce de résistance* at every meal. Then Jeannette, the cook, was so clever at all kinds of soups, and would go along the roads pulling little

tufts of foliage out of the banks, from which she would produce a delicious *maigre* or a fresh salad that was quite astonishing.

Nellie Grey was a Roman Catholic, as her mother had been before her. The church stood outside the town, and was not in any way remarkable, except for the beauty of the view. Indeed it was impossible to stir out of the streets without coming into sight of the distant Pyrenees, from early morning to late evening constantly varying in the color of their splendor.

One of the prettiest spots was the little cemetery, lying on the side of the hill. Thither the two girls would walk every Sunday evening before the hour of the last service, the *Salut*. They accompanied Madame Jean, for in the little cemetery lay one of the secrets of her sadness—two baby graves side by side, their little mounds railed in with white railings like the sides of a child's crib, and within a bright, wild bush of flowers, varying with the season of the year, always sweet-smelling and luxuriant.

Madame Jean would often kneel on the wooden step at the foot of the tiny graves and hide her face, and become so absorbed in prayer that she would hear nothing—not even the church bells—and the two girls would rouse her tenderly, and glance at each other with awe at the sight of her far-away look. There was another secret in her sad life: Monsieur Jean believed nothing. He was tolerant; he did not scoff, but for all that, he had no faith.

"Nellie," said Madame Jean very softly one day, "the Holy Innocents must have a peculiar power in prayer, for their prayers must be so pure, and unbiassed by even natural earthly love. Do you not think so?"

"I do, indeed, dear madame," said Nellie gently, and Madame Jean said no more.

One day Madame la Harpe came into the salon, where all the younger ladies were busy at their different occupations.

"My children," she said, "I have a good deed to propose to you for the improvement of your souls. Are you willing?"

"Assuredly!" said Amélie, looking up with a smile; "*fi donc!* mamma; do you doubt it?"

"It is old Benoîte come up again. A hundred more francs are wanted. Your papa will give five; perhaps among us we can make up a few more."

"Who is old Benoîte? What is it for?"

"You shall go to the kitchen and hear the story, *mignonne*," said Madame Jean. "What do you say to a *quête*, mamma? A begging expedition?"

"Just what I was about to propose, Françoise. You and Amélie can take half the town, and I myself, with Nellie, can do the rest."

"Oh, no!" cried Nellie shrinking, "I do not think I could go begging. I never did such a thing, I should not like it at all."

"Then, how very good for your soul!" said Madame Jean quickly and smiling.

"You will not mind, Nellie," said Amélie encouragingly. "Mamma will do all the talking. She is the best *quêteuse* in Sauveterre."

"Go to the kitchen, *ma fille*," said Madame la Harpe, "and take Amélie with you, and hear Benoîte's story; she talks French, not Basque."

The two girls went down to the kitchen. A strong, handsome-looking old peasant woman was seated in the place of honor by the window.

Jeannette was peeling onions in a big wooden bowl; Célestine, the other *bonne*, balancing herself backwards or forwards on her pointed *sabots*, doing nothing. "Mademoiselle has not seen Benoîte," she said, pointing out the peasant with admiration.

"Ah! so this is the young foreign lady," said Benoîte, not rising, but lifting up her head, and looking at Nellie with a pair of fine, dark eyes strangely brilliant and clear. "And I hear that she is charitable and never omits to give her sous at the church door. I may surely depend upon help from her."

"Surely," murmured the two *bonnes* together.

"But then, Benoîte," said Amélie playfully, "this young lady sees you in a beautiful dark cotton gown, with a crimson handkerchief and a silk one on your head. She must say to herself, why does this rich person beg — *hein?*?"

"So she knows nothing, my little demoiselle? Sit down, sit down, you shall hear," and with the gesture of a hostess rather than a guest, she made the two girls sit down on the bench before her.

"I was young once, *mes filles*," she began, "and I had a young husband; he was very bad, very wicked. Most husbands are; be advised, my children, do not be so foolish as to marry; the single are happier, it is better so — *va!*"

They listened with all submission.

"My husband was so bad that I often wished myself dead; he beat me, he turned me out on the hillside twice on winter nights, he drank — at last he was never sober. We had two children; the eldest was a girl, her name was Aline. I called her Aline after Mlle. Aline de Ma-bendie, the last of the old family. Aline was three years old when, in a drunken fit, her father killed her."

Nellie gave a start of horror and dismay, then looked with astonishment at Benoîte. She had told the story so often that it had become a merely mechanical narration, in fact there was a little triumphant complacency in her voice, but no trace of emotion.

"Yes," continued Benoîte. "But that was going too far; Monsieur le Curé would not absolve him for that; the drink-fever came on, and he died without the blessing of the Church; he was very bad, my children. Heaven rest his soul! Well."

Her dark eyes lit up, she was evidently coming to the interest of her story. "My second child was Jean Marie; he was an infant at the time; emotion had tried me, I could not nourish him. I had a goat at the time with a kid. I sold the kid, and gave Jean Marie to the goat; she suckled him as her own kid, and at the sound of his cry, would come bounding in to stand over his cradle and feed him, and he thrived well. Now I knew that my bad husband could only be saved by a very great effort on my part, and I vowed that I would make my boy into a priest, and that his first mass should be for his father's soul. I labored, *mes filles*, I worked night and day; my hands are not weak yet, do you see? but once they were stronger than two women. God helped me. Monsieur le Curé saw my purpose and educated my boy, caused him to pass into the college; he learns a great deal, my little Jean Marie. See! here are his certificates," and she drew a little bundle of papers from her pocket. "Five is the highest mark, see! Mesdemoiselles, all of you, come close. Divinity five, philosophy five, good conduct four, and so on and so on. Monsieur le Curé says they are excellent, and now he will be ordained in three months, and a hundred francs are required for his fees, and these are wanting."

And with a fine dramatic gesture Benoîte rose to her feet, drew her cloak round her, and prepared to leave the kitchen.

"I commend the matter to *ces demoiselles*," she said. "*Au revoir*."

"She has confidence," said Jeannette with admiration.

"She is quite right," said Amélie. "Come, courage, every one. You, Jeannette and Célestine, must also do your best. Fancy if, after all, Jean Marie should not be ordained."

"It must not be thought of," said the stout Jeannette, putting her arms akimbo — "if I have to resign all my economies."

"You will not refuse to undertake the *quête* now, Nellie?" said Amélie, taking the arm of her friend. "Indeed, you need have no fear. Mamma, as I said, is an accomplished *quêteuse*."

Half an hour later, Madame la Harpe in a splendid toilette covered with black fringe, and a bonnet with ostrich feathers, started on her pious mission with Nellie by her side, looking very fair and shy in her white gown.

They went to all the principal houses in the little town, and Nellie, at first painfully shy, became more and more amused.

"It is impossible that you can refuse me, madame," Madame la Harpe would say in one house. "You have such beautiful and amiable children, who are so especially blest in your interior! — such a good object! — ah! monsieur, your face is the very type of the benevolent. You have never refused me before, and never, no, never have I asked for a more worthy object."

Sous, half-francs, francs, even five-franc pieces rained upon her.

"Nellie," said Madame la Harpe, "I am dead with fatigue, I believe my bonnet to be on one side, my face streams. Truly, when one is as fat as I am, one should limit one's piety. Stop; there is Monsieur le Marquis himself. She gave me ten francs, but he does not know that, and he might give us a trifle."

A gentleman was strolling up the street with two fat mottled pointers at his heels.

Monsieur le Marquis *en province* did not take the trouble to shave; his appearance was not improved by a three weeks' growth of irregular whiskers, his white linen dress and panama hat with a broad black ribbon spoke of the ease and comfort of elegance relaxed.

"Ah, monsieur," cried Madame la Harpe, rapidly crossing the road with the bounding motion peculiar to her, "you are just the one whom I have been hoping to meet!"

"At your service, madame," with a low bow, and the gentleman removed his cigarette from between his teeth.

"Monsieur, it is for a work of charity," she began.

"Ah bah! I leave all these matters to my wife," said Monsieur le Marquis somewhat abruptly.

"We all know the charity of madame your wife, but see, monsieur, I should like to give you also the opportunity of doing a little something for your soul."

"Which wants it badly, *hein*, madame?" said the marquis, laughing.

"Of that I can be no judge until you have either refused me or given me a little donation."

"An excellent answer, madame. So you will not accept my wife's alms as mine?"

"Come, come, though you are married fifteen years, you have not lost your individuality."

"And this young lady. Is she on the same quest?"

Madame la Harpe gave a rapid glance at Nellie, which she interpreted rightly as an entreaty for help. Monsieur le Marquis stood looking at her with his head on one side, and a pair of bright little eyes glancing like jet beads. She looked up merrily.

"Monsieur, it is my first *quête*," she said. "And if I did chance to take home a gold napoleon I should —"

"Well, what would you do?"

"I should jump for joy," said Nellie demurely.

Madame la Harpe looked shocked, she evidently thought that Nellie's demand was excessive.

"How is one to refuse," said Monsieur le Marquis, throwing out his hands, "when wit and beauty beg?"

"And conscience enjoins," said Nellie.

"Ah, for that!" and he gave a little shrug of the shoulders. Then opening his purse he took out a shining napoleon, and handed it to Nellie with a profound bow.

"Now jump! jump for joy, mademoiselle," he said.

But Nellie had become suddenly shy, and blushed rosily.

"Experience is not so charming as anticipation," he said sharply.

"You are mistaken," answered Nellie.

"I shall jump when I get home!"

"I am delighted to hear it!" And with another salute, Monsieur le Marquis resumed his cigarette and strolled on.

"That is beyond my dreams," said Ma-

dame la Harpe. "I wonder how Amélie and my daughter-in-law have fared?"

"No one could refuse Madame Jean," said Nellie. "It would be like refusing St. Catherine herself."

"Yes, she is a very saint, my daughter-in-law," said Madame la Harpe with a sigh. "Her vocation was always the cloister."

"Indeed?" said Nellie eagerly. "Then why did she marry?"

"It was the will of her parents. She had a good portion, and was a very suitable *parti* for our Jean. We had no idea that her inclination was so strong a one when we arranged the marriage."

"And Monsieur Jean?"

"He never saw her till all was arranged; then he was quite satisfied; he looked upon her vocation as a childish folly that she would soon shake off, but she never will."

"Never!" said Nellie emphatically.

At this moment the sound of sabots clopping after them in full pursuit arrested their attention, and Toinnette, the fat *bonne* from the inn, came up with them.

"Stop, stop, madame!" she cried in Basque. "Let me tell you something. The omnibus from Orthez has just come in, and three gentlemen have descended at the inn. I do not know whether they are to stop or to go on when Jean Marie's horses have rested, but they are rich, and beautiful — officers! and in uniform; they are now seated on the terrace each with a cigar, a *demitasse*, and cognac. I am convinced that they would give largely. It was Madame's Jeannette who sent me flying after you, ladies."

Madame la Harpe set her fringes to rights with a shake, righted her bonnet and turned round.

"Courage, my child," she said to Nellie.

"This task shall be performed by you."

"But, madame, surely — would it be really right?"

"Your duty — and not the smallest impropriety in it! Heavens! My dear child, should I — I of all people — advise an indiscretion? Anybody may speak or converse to anybody on a *quête*, and no one ever takes advantage of it. You may meet the same individual ten minutes after, no one ventures to bow, there is no acquaintance. It is strange that you should be ignorant of this etiquette. But here we are! Why, you are quite pale, Nellie?"

"I do not like it at all, madame," said Nellie nervously.

They approached the narrow strip of garden bordered by terrace, belonging to the inn. At a small iron table, in the midst of a kind of arbor of untidy greenery, sat three officers, whose epaulettes and gleaming sword-belts caught the light of the now setting sun.

"Now, my child, courage."

Nellie went forward desperately — went quite forward till she stood before the three men, who all rose to their feet simultaneously.

"Messieurs," she began tremulously and clasping her hands nervously together with a little gesture of entreaty, "if you had a little money, just a few francs, to bestow on charity!"

"*Tiens!*" exclaimed one of the gentlemen, in a tone of such unmixed astonishment that Nellie was seized with an irresistible inclination to laugh.

"It is not for myself," she said. "Indeed it is for Benoîte."

"And who is Benoîte?" said the oldest of the party — a stout gentleman with a magnificent white moustache pointed with mastic — with great severity.

"Benoîte has a son and —"

"Ah, Benoîte has a son! then why, mademoiselle, may I ask, does not Benoîte's son support his mother?"

"The young lady is an inexperienced *quêteuse*, *mon général*," said one of the officers in a low voice.

Nellie caught the words, and looked gratefully at the speaker. He was tall for a Frenchman, with a dark face and bright, observing eyes, a moustache of the kind called coquettish in France, short, well-trimmed, and turned upwards at the corners with a twist, cheeks and chin of the blue tint of a dark man closely shaved.

When his eyes met hers there was a look of unbounded admiration, mixed with some pity in them.

"Old Benoîte's son cannot help her, Monsieur le Général," she said with some spirit. "He is in a seminary, and is to be ordained if, amongst us, who are the friends of his mother, enough money can be raised to pay his fees."

"*Peste!*" said the general. "I am sorry, mademoiselle, but I can give you nothing; if I had my will, the conscription should extend to the priesthood, and every man-jack among them should serve his time. We shall not have long to wait before it is so."

Nellie made a little haughty bow and turned away, when she was again arrested by the young officer who had spoken before.

"If mademoiselle will accept of my small contribution," he said, handing her a couple of francs, "I shall feel honored."

Nellie took the money, saying the formal words used on each occasion by Madame la Harpe: "The good God will reward you, monsieur"—and she was going on her way when she was startled by a shrill little cry and a rush past her.

"Etienne!"

"Mamma!"

And the young officer was in Madame la Harpe's arms, rapid kisses from each side to the other, showering between them.

"You here, my son; and not come at once to me! but what does it mean?"

"Hush," and he walked away with them out of earshot of the other officers. "I am with the general, mamma, and cannot leave him till he departs by the diligence in half an hour. Then, at once I join you! I have news for you too, but I must not stay now. *A tantôt!*"

And he returned to his duty.

The general was smoking and saying blasphemous things, launching bad words and worse insinuations against the priests, his aide-de-camp listening with profound indifference, when Etienne la Harpe came back.

"You are of this town, *docteur*," said the general. "Who is the lovely *quêtuse*?"

"She is a young Englishwoman, *mon général*, staying with my mother."

"*Peste!* I envy your luck—she is beautiful as a houri."

CHAPTER III.

"BUT who is he, madame?" asked Nellie when her breath came back, and she and Madame la Harpe were hurrying rapidly home to prepare for the new arrival.

"Who is he? He is my Etienne, my beautiful, good, youngest son, what will they all say! We did not expect to see him for another three months."

"But I had understood that your youngest son was a doctor, madame?"

"So he is a doctor—military doctor, you know. He must have got promotion! nothing else could have brought him back so soon! oh la! la! how my bones do ache! To think that Etienne should be come back so soon!"

"Well, mamma! and what success have you had?" cried Amélie, meeting them at the door.

"He is come, Amélie! He has arrived with the general and is seeing him off by

the diligence at this very moment." Amélie looked bewildered.

"Come!" she said. "But is it then too late? has he missed his chance for lack of the fees?"

"Missed his chance! for shame, Amélie, it means promotion, on the contrary. Oh the joy of seeing him again!"

Amélie's hands went up in the air, her eyes opened.

"Heavens, mamma! is this delirium? And you look so hot and exhausted! What is she speaking about?" she added, leading her mother in, and appealing to Nellie, but before Nellie could reply, Jeannette came flying up to the door, the ends of her handkerchief streaming behind her head.

"But hear, mesdames! Monsieur le docteur has come. He is here in person! Oh, the happy day!"

"Etienne?" cried Amélie.

"Etienne! Who speaks of Etienne?" and out of his room came Monsieur la Harpe in his shirt-sleeves.

"Etienne is here! he but sends off the general and joins us!" said Madame la Harpe, sinking into a chair.

"Hark! the horn! the diligence goes!" cried Jeannette.

The distant note of the diligence sounded on the air, and it had hardly died away before Monsieur Etienne came clanking into view in all the splendor of full uniform. Nellie stood by watching the lavish kisses, from the first ones bestowed heartily on both the plump cheeks of "papa" to those finally given to Jeannette, the foster-sister of monsieur le docteur.

The warm greetings were over at last. The evening was very hot, and after dinner the whole party were glad to descend to the terrace. That evening was never effaced from Nellie's memory. They all sat grouped, the ladies with their work, the gentlemen leaning back luxuriously. Madame Jean with her calm, pale face and long black gown flitted about making glasses of syrup for Monsieur Jean and Etienne, the latter took the hand which presented the glass to him and pressed it to his lips.

"Always a ministering angel, *ma sœur*," he said, and she smiled her sweet, sad smile.

Nellie was too shy to look much at the young officer, but his quick, bright glances followed her every movement. She sat leaning her head on her hand, her elbow on the low parapet; the fair, soft masses of her golden hair were a little disordered

by the soft wind; her large, blue eyes were cast down and veiled often by their thick, dark lashes; the bright pink color came and went in her cheek. Darkness stole softly down over the mountains, and deepened the shadows in the valley; the noisy dash of the river below made a sweet, monotonous music.

There came a certain hush upon all the party; they felt the calm of the hour. Monsieur Jean broke the silence first; he was, as he flattered himself, too much a man of the world to be romantic.

"You have never told us what brought you back so much sooner than we expected, Etienne," he said.

"I told my mother," answered the young doctor, bending forward and patting the little, fat hand of Madame la Harpe. "I have promotion. I have been offered the post of *médecin-en-chef* de l'hôpital militaire of . . . Algiers!"

"*Sapristi!*" cried Monsieur Jean; "but that is a good position! a first-rate position!"

"It is!" said Etienne, leaning back and twisting the point of his moustache.

"I always said that he would go far!" said Monsieur la Harpe, rubbing his hands with a chuckle.

"Merit, skill, and perseverance always succeed," said Monsieur Jean.

"With the blessing of the good God," said Madame Jean softly. "Etienne, receive my congratulations."

"And mine, and mine," came the chorus. Nellie felt that she must add her little offering, and she said timidly, "Let me also congratulate you, monsieur." He turned sharply round at her words with a sudden movement of *emproisement*.

"You are too good, mademoiselle," he said. He looked at her, hoping for some further speech, but she said no more.

"Yes, it is a good position, Etienne," repeated Monsieur Jean, leaning back and sipping his syrup. "But Algiers is far from home; you will be lonely. What do you say, my father—shall we occupy ourselves with making a marriage for this famous *médecin-en-chef*?"

"I have thought much of it," said Madame la Harpe gravely.

A sudden flush came over the young doctor's dark face.

"Come," he said, with a little laugh, "if you are so indiscreet as to begin such a subject before all the world, I must vanish."

"All the world!" said Monsieur la Harpe. "Why, you are in the bosom of your family!"

"And as for Nellie," said Amélie affectionately, "she is one of us."

"A dear little sister," said Madame Jean impulsively. Madame la Harpe added a sounding kiss.

Nellie laughed a little, and blushed still more, but she was touched. A contrast flashed into her mind: all this caressing, this vivacity and demonstrative words, the pretty flattery, the petting, and idle, sunny life, how pleasant it was! She remembered how different it was at Holmedale, where every one was busy, where her Aunt Mary always expected her to be drawing, or singing, or working in the house, where her kiss in the morning was so calm and gentle. And Dick, how well she remembered his bitter words: "To go back would be the first reasonable thing you ever did in your life." The words had not struck her at the time, but now they came back in contrast with all the petting in the new life. Then came a little pang of self-reproach, and a vision of Dick's kind, sorrowful eyes looking down upon her with that haunting look of intense love.

"Mademoiselle, you are cold, you shiver; allow me to put this round you."

It was Etienne offering her a little shawl; in his manner the devotion of a Frenchman.

Down below the fireflies came out and danced their wild, starry dance in the valley. Nellie had shivered, but not with cold—a strange, sad feeling stole over her. Dick, faithful, noble Dick, was far away, with his young, vigorous life blighted by the cold touch of disappointment. She knew now that it must be so, and she took the shawl from Etienne la Harpe with a smile, and a little profusion of pretty French words.

Madame Jean that night came up to the bedroom occupied by Nellie and Amélie, and sat down on the window-seat while they loosened their hair. Nellie's was very long, and flowed all round her down to the knees when unbound.

"You are like a fair Magdalen, my child," said Madame Jean admiringly.

Nellie came and knelt beside her, putting her arms round her waist. "And you are lovely as Our Lady of Sorrows," she said. "Ah! why is there sorrow to hurt this beautiful, happy world?"

"Happiness is not everything, Nellie: live for anything! for love, for duty, for charity if you will, but not for happiness."

"There is nothing else for which I care to live," said Nellie, throwing back her

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long hair and looking up at her friend, "without it I should wish to die!"

"God help you, poor little sparkling firefly," said Madame Jean tenderly, "and God help the good, noble Englishman who loves you so!"

"How do you know that?" cried Nellie, starting and blushing crimson. "I do not believe it; he does not know what love is."

"Nelline! Nelline! and do you?" cried Amélie, laughing.

"I can imagine," said Nellie hotly. "My cousin finds fault with me—true love would think me perfection!"

Madame Jean patted her cheek. "Well, well, *mignonne*," she said, "your good friends will take care of you, you need not worry your little self about such matters. Go to bed and sleep."

CHAPTER IV.

THE sunny days passed on.

"How changed is monsieur le docteur!" said Jeannette to her fellow-bonne. "Formerly he was out all day, now he spends all his time at home, and he is absorbed—*distracted*. He smokes less, he uses double the perfumes. What is it?"

"*Dame!* it is not difficult to see!" said Célestine, shrugging her shoulders.

"My wife," said Monsieur la Harpe very gravely, "I have something of importance to say to you."

Madame la Harpe looked startled; it was not often that her husband originated an idea, but when he did, it was very often a good one.

"I listen, my friend," she said.

"We need go no further in our correspondence with Monsieur and Madame Lagrange. Etienne will never marry their daughter."

"What! never marry her! a young lady with sixty-five thousand francs! Madame Lagrange would never have given a thought to Etienne but for this excellent position he has acquired."

"No matter," said Monsieur la Harpe, "he will never marry her."

"But why, my friend?" said his wife, with suppressed ire, and a lurking dread that her own suspicions might be confirmed by his answer.

"Because he has lost his heart, and set his whole affections on the little Englishwoman."

"Good Heavens!" she exclaimed, sinking heavily into a chair.

Monsieur la Harpe rubbed his hands. "I have been reflecting, *ma femme*," he said,

She looked up with a ray of hope—his rare reflections were apt to be good.

"I propose to say nothing to Etienne," he said, "but to write to that good Englishman myself, to see whether an arrangement could be arrived at. These Englishmen are rich; he is her nearest relative; it is for him to settle her in life; at all events we shall hear what he has to propose. If the affair fails, it will be time enough to thwart Etienne, but I am not without hope. Hist! not a word! let us keep this little affair between ourselves."

Madame la Harpe smiled and sighed. "*Mou ami*," she said, "*finesse* is required. What do you say? Shall we not break off finally the Lagrange affair, but leave both open for the time? Etienne may be in love, but he is too much a man of the world to let that interfere with a business arrangement such as marriage."

"It is possible!" said Monsieur la Harpe, "but God forbid that we should have another child with eyes like those of Jean's wife!"

"Bah! men are made of quite another paste," said Madame la Harpe.

Monsieur la Harpe went to the window, and by a jerk at the string of the *persiennes* enabled himself to see out.

"Look, *ma bonne*," he said. "Judge for yourself."

The young people were all on the terrace, Amélie and Madame Jean seated and both embroidering, Nellie filling a large earthenware pot with a huge wild bouquet of sweet roses; by her side stood Doctor Etienne, in his attitude, the turn of head, pose, everything, the look of *empressement* almost peculiar to a Frenchman. He seemed to be speaking very earnestly, for they saw Nellie suddenly pause and look up at him, her eyes met his, and suddenly the bright pink color flushed her fair little face; she seemed to hesitate, then shyly took up a little rose and handed it to him. He pressed it to his lips with passion, and Nellie, gathering up all that remained of her flowers into her gown, went hastily over to Madame Jean and knelt down beside her.

"Oh la! la!" exclaimed Madame la Harpe.

"Am I, or am I not a man of penetration?" said her husband, smiting his breast. "I go in, I write."

Far away in sunny Berkshire, on a sweet, fresh evening of the English summer, Dick Gordon and his mother sat in the garden under rustling linden-trees, when a large and important-looking letter

with a foreign post-mark was put into his hand.

"From Nellie, Dick?" said Mrs. Gordon.

"No! but from Sauveterre all the same." He glanced at the signature.

"From the old father; how odd! What can he have to say?"

"Nellie has not written for some time," said Mrs. Gordon, looking rather wistfully at her son.

He did not answer; he was reading the letter, and though a fair French scholar, the small, neat handwriting seemed not quite easy to decipher.

Dick read it quite through, then without a word of comment he handed it to his mother.

"Mother, the evening is fine, I am going for a long walk," he said. She thought that there was something a little odd in his voice, but before she could speak he was gone, she heard his footsteps crunching the gravel, then a hollow sound as he crossed the rustic bridge over the little river, and he was gone.

The tears rose to Mrs. Gordon's eyes, but she brushed them quickly away, put on her spectacles and read the letter.

"MY DEAR MONSIEUR,—

"You may recollect that at the time of the interview I had the honor to have with you, I undertook to watch over and take care of your charming young cousin as a child of my own: at that time neither I nor my wife could foresee how much her amiable character, her beauty, her freshness, and her piety would endear her to us all. You have doubtless heard from Mademoiselle Nellie of the arrival at Sauveterre of my second son Etienne, médecin-en-chef de l'hôpital militaire de . . . en Alger. This grade he has recently attained: it is a fine position, especially when acquired at so young an age; my son is twenty-four years of age. His mother and myself before consigning him to so distant a station are anxious to marry him, and already a very desirable alliance has presented itself. But youth will be youth. My son has become madly in love with mademoiselle your cousin. It is with difficulty I write, terrified lest you should perceive in me the smallest absence of delicacy when I venture to say that Mademoiselle Nellie, with every discretion, yet appears favorably inclined towards him. You are aware, my dear monsieur, that these things are affairs of business. I therefore venture to ask whether any arrangements could be made,

so as to avoid the sacrifice of these youthful and interesting sentiments. My son, with an income from his appointment of twelve thousand five hundred francs a year, enjoys also the interest of the sum that he will inherit at my death, namely one hundred thousand francs. You will naturally understand that when a man has a competence so comfortable to offer, his parents hope for some reciprocity in choosing a wife for him. With the assurance of my profoundly distinguished sentiments, I am,

"JEAN MARIE ETIENNE LA HARPE."

Mrs. Gordon laid down the letter with a little gasp. "My poor boy," she said to herself.

The air blew chilly through the trees. She drew her shawl round her, shivered, and went in-doors.

She could not go to bed or rest. She waited in her room, as the slow hours struck one after another, till she heard Dick's step on the stairs—a slow, heavy step, as of a tired man. She slipped out into the passage, and met him at the door of his room.

"Good-night, mother," he said, kissing her very affectionately. "Good-night, dear mother."

That was all that was ever said between them to betray poor Dick's buried hopes.

CHAPTER V.

MONSIEUR and Madame la Harpe awaited with ill-concealed impatience the answer to his letter. Things were not quite easy to manage. The Lagrange family were beginning to dislike the procrastination and indecision of the La Harpes' proceedings. It was even intimated that before the week was over, Madame Lagrange would arrive in Sauveterre, and this idea was by no means agreeable to the La Harpes.

But on the first day that an answer from England could have been reasonably expected, it came.

Monsieur la Harpe and his wife, both quite tremulous with excitement, had a little mild contention as to who should break the seal, in which the lady prevailed.

"Heavens! what writing!" she exclaimed.

"Colossal, but legible," said Monsieur la Harpe, and he slowly read as follows:

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"My cousin will have a fortune of one hundred and twenty-five thousand francs. But before finally consenting to such a

marriage as you do me the honor to propose, I should prefer making the acquaintance of Docteur la Harpe. I propose, therefore, to arrive in Sauveterre the day after your receipt of this letter.

"Yours, etc."

"Most satisfactory," said Monsieur la Harpe complacently. "It more than doubles Etienne's fortune."

"Yes," said Madame la Harpe gloomily. "It is delightful, but oh, *mon ami*, if he should not arrive before Madame Lagrange!"

Monsieur la Harpe shrugged his shoulders.

"Let us not anticipate misfortunes," he said. "And now to tell Etienne."

He opened the door and called his son. The young doctor came in twirling his moustaches, with defiance in his face.

Monsieur la Harpe was seated pompously, his hands spread on his ample tartan waistcoat.

"My son," he began, "on the subject of your marriage."

"Papa," said the young man firmly, "my affections are engaged. It is with infinite pain, but without hesitation, that I am obliged to refuse the proffered alliance."

"Sir! Your affections are engaged!" cried Monsieur la Harpe, indignation in his tone, a twinkle in his eye.

"Irrevocably," was the answer, in a voice of despondency.

"And may I ask the name of the young lady?"

"Need you ask?" said Etienne, throwing out both his hands. "When you yourself have presented me to her under your own roof. *Sapristi!* one has eyes."

"Is it Nellie Grey?"

"Ah, papa!"

"My son; I bestow her upon you!"

A little cry of astonishment, then Etienne threw himself into his father's arms and kissed him on both cheeks, immediately repeating the little scene with his mother.

They showed him Dick Gordon's letter, of which he approved highly, and he readily agreed to his parents' suggestion—that not a word should be said to Nellie until after her cousin's arrival.

The next day Madame la Harpe, having quite forgotten that Nellie Grey was still ignorant of her cousin's proposed visit, spoke of it in the middle of the twelve o'clock breakfast.

"Nellie," she said, "we shall hear the horn of the diligence about five o'clock,

and monsieur your cousin is sure to come by it."

"My cousin coming?" cried Nellie, very much startled. "Indeed, madame?"

"Ah! I ought to have told you, *mignonne*. Yes; he has consented to come at last and pay us a little visit."

"We shall be delighted to see him," said Madame Jean kindly.

Nellie did not quite know what to say. Her cheeks burned, her head throbbed, so various and conflicting were the feelings the news awakened in her.

Docteur la Harpe, seeing her confusion, was seized with a fit of jealousy, and went away for the whole afternoon fishing in the Gave.

"One would imagine you were not altogether pleased to see your cousin, Nellie," said Madame Jean a little sadly.

"I don't know," said Nellie, pushing her hair away from her temples with rather a bewildered look. "I cannot tell whether I am or not."

"But why, *mignonne*? He is so good and kind, and so fond of his little cousin! Why, what is it, child?"

For Nellie had suddenly put her arms round her, and burst into tears.

"It is nothing," she said, drying her tears, but with a catch in her voice. "Only I am angry with myself. We were so happy and peaceful, every day succeeded each other with so much that was delightful. I am a little sorry that any change should come."

"And you think that your good, loving cousin's arrival will interrupt this happy state of things?" said Madame Jean, a little severely.

"No, no! I don't know what I mean. Do not think badly of me! But Dick finds fault with me."

"He loves you dearly."

"Yes, yes! Don't you understand? A great deal too much. I am not good enough! It oppresses me."

There was petulance in her voice. Madame Jean understood all. She wiped away the tears with her handkerchief.

"Well, don't cry any more, *mignonne*, or he will think we do not make you happy."

"Oh! he can never think that," cried Nellie startled.

"I don't see how he can think otherwise, my child, if you meet him with red eyes and a little red nose."

"I will run up for some rose-water."

Madame Jean looked after her as she ran away, with a smile and a little sigh.

"I hope the poor, brave, good English-

man will not take it too much to heart," she said to herself.

Dick Gordon arrived duly by the diligence. He went first to the inn to make some improvement in his appearance, as he had travelled day and night, but before seven o'clock he arrived at the *Maison de Mabendie*, and found the whole party just rising from table.

It was exceedingly hot. The gentlemen were clad in white linen from head to foot.

Nellie put out a very cold little hand to meet her cousin, and hardly ventured to look up at him; but when she did so, she gave a little start.

"Oh, Dick! Dick! Have you been ill?"

"No, Nellie; certainly not. What makes you think so?"

"You are so changed."

Dick's face had grown very thin, which made his eyes look much larger, and a great deal of his brown, ruddy color was gone, and his expression was much graver, firmer, and older.

"I do not think I can be more changed than you are, Nellie," he said.

"Am I changed?" she said a little coquettishly, conscious of trained curls on her brow instead of the old, natural, silky waviness, and of considerable alterations in dress.

"Yes, very much; you look older and more sedate, and you have become quite a little Frenchwoman."

Nellie had half expected a compliment, and missed it. She gave a little shrug of the shoulders.

In the evening Dick Gordon and the two parents had an interview; it was almost, but not quite satisfactory. If Nellie should consent to this marriage, her cousin would settle five thousand pounds on her, but the money was to remain in England, in securities chosen by himself, and in the hands of trustees. *Monsieur la Harpe* would have preferred that his son should have the sole command of the money, but Dick was inexorable, and after all, as the old gentleman said, "Nowhere could it be in safer hands than in those of this most amiable of cousins."

It was proposed that Dick should speak to Nellie the following morning. He shrunk from the duty, and even proposed that the young doctor should be permitted to plead his cause, but this idea was received with such horror that Dick perceived himself to have been guilty of an indiscretion of some enormity, and, in-

wardly chafing against all this nonsense as he deemed it, he consented. The opportunity came immediately after breakfast. Dick stopped Nellie as she was following *Amélie* out of the room.

"Nellie dear, I want to speak to you," he said gently. She became rather pale, but came obediently back into the dining-room.

"They will be coming to take away the things," said Dick nervously. "Can't we go somewhere where we shall not be disturbed?"

Nellie did not speak, but led the way into a small, unused salon. Dick walked to the window, and began to speak with his back to her.

"Nellie," he said, "I have something very important to say to you, and I don't know how to begin. You see, in England a man proposes for himself, but here it is different. *Monsieur* and *Madame la Harpe* have asked me to speak to you about *Doctor Etienne*."

"Ah!"

Dick turned round abruptly. Nellie was standing with her hands straight down before her, clasped tightly, her face raised, her fresh lips parted, and a glowing, tender light in the blue eyes upraised and fixed on vacancy, that he had never seen before.

His head sank on his breast.

"I think I need not ask," he said gently, "what your answer will be. Will you marry him, Nellie?"

"Yes."

The word was hardly breathed.

Dick turned away for a moment, passed his hand quickly over his face, then came forward abruptly and took her hand.

"Nellie," he said, his lips quivering in spite of every effort, "you are very young; I stand in the position of brother or even of father to you. Let me ask you to consider. *Etienne la Harpe* is a good, honest, well-conducted man."

The words seemed to jar upon Nellie. She drew her hand away.

"No, hear me, dear," he said gravely.

"To marry him you must resign your country, your home, all the habits of your youth, indeed even your old friends."

"All this is nothing," she said.

Dick turned away, this time bitterly wounded, but he would not show it. He smiled bravely and said, "I have certainly said enough, Nellie, and *Doctor Etienne* may now plead his own cause. I will go and tell him."

She put her hands on his arm and looked up at him.

"Before you go, Dick," she said, "say, 'God bless you, Nellie.'"

"God bless you, my own little sister."

"And you—you don't mind, do you? You know," falteringly, "you always found fault with me."

"Well, Nellie, never again! I have resigned all my right to do so. But did I? I don't think I did; but let me go."

Dick went down-stairs. He said two words to Doctor Etienne, who dashed upstairs three steps at a time; then he took his hat and went out.

Madame Jean passed him, and caught a glimpse of his white, set face. "Ah, *mon Dieu*," she sighed, "the world is very sad."

But there were two up-stairs who did not think so.

CHAPTER VI.

DURING the few weeks of preparation before the wedding, Dick Gordon went away, travelling to Pau and Biarritz, then over the mountains into Spain. He stayed away till the very day before the marriage.

The ladies had often bewailed the shortness of the time, but Etienne must go to Algiers to begin his new duties, and *modistes* and *lingères* must be hastened accordingly.

Dick Gordon gave his cousin two hundred pounds for her trousseau, and the result was charming.

On the very day on which Etienne and Nellie were married, old Benoîte's son was ordained.

"A good omen!" exclaimed Madame Jean.

The last moment came, all must separate; bride and bridegroom bound to their far-distant home; Dick back to England with a weary weight of chill disappointment on his young heart; Madame Jean, strong to suffer and strong to pray, left at Sauveterre.

There were tears and sobs and kisses.

Doctor Etienne twisted his moustaches and looked on.

"Take care of her," said Dick, his warm grasp hurting the young Frenchman's delicate hand.

"That is the affair as much of my honor as of my heart," he answered, and embraced Dick on both cheeks.

Nellie leaned forward in the carriage as they drove away, watching till the very last. A little tiny pang stole across her even then. Dick was nearly a head taller than Etienne or any man there. "It is all very well," she said to herself a little

impatiently, "but poor dear Dick puts every one out of proportion."

Dick Gordon went home. He found his mother waiting for him at the door.

"Well, mother dear," he said, "I have married her."

"My dear Dick, what?"

He gave an odd little laugh.

"I have become so used to French ways," he said; "I have married her to Dr. la Harpe."

"I hope she will live to repent it," said Mrs. Gordon, a hot, burning feeling rising in her breast against the girl who had brought the shadow on her son's life.

"God forbid," said Dick hastily.

From The Contemporary Review.

PEASANT PROPERTIES IN AUVERGNE.

JOTTINGS IN AUVERGNE.

ROYAT is a watering-place which has lately sprung into favor; it has hardly yet indeed attained its majority. Five-and-twenty years ago a *cure* remarked that in winter the snow always melted at a particular spot; a hole was dug, and the hot water bubbled up from the old volcanic communications in the heart of the earth, which once raised the line of sugar-loaf hills, the now extinct craters of the Puy-de-Dôme and its neighbors, and poured forth the streams of lava which still can be distinctly traced along their sides. The waters were known to the Romans, who, with the wonderful instinct which detected everything of value or interest in a new province, had made their stone *piscines*, and used the spring for their warm baths, traces of which were disinterred when the *source* was rediscovered.

We crossed France by the Lyons railroad, passing forests of shabby, stunted wood in very sterile soil, tracts of sandy or chalky land, with withered crops of potatoes, stunted maize, corn just reaped, and often barren hills and commons of which hardly any use was made, where in England hundreds of sheep would have found a living. Here, three or four together, with a boy to look after them, or (in two cases only) twenty or thirty, with a wretched *bergère*, were all that we saw.

That the climate allowed peaches to ripen on standards was evident near the towns, but the present cultivators were too down-trodden to grow even an apple-tree. At last we reached the plains of the Limagne, and matters improved. We

passed through Clermont—a dark, dirty town, crowned with its beautiful cathedral built of black lava, set high on a little hill, and the great landmark far and near. Royat is only a mile away—a mere settlement of hotels, which are perched on the side of a narrow gorge, with the hot water bubbling up at the foot. Each house seems intent on climbing as it were on the shoulders of the one below, and for each a perch is cut in the solid mountain-side higher than the last. “Cet emplacement pour maison à vendre” was inscribed on a wall of rock seventy or eighty feet high, with a morsel of vineyard at the top, the whole of which would have to be removed bodily before any dwelling could be built there.

We found a resting-place fortunately on the hog's back above the steaming close garden of the *établissement*, with a grand view of the cathedral, in its subject plain, but sadly masked by the lodging-houses growing up in every direction. The whole place exists only as an attendant on the bathers and spa drinkers,—an assemblage of hotels, flies, booths, sedan-chair porters, fruit and flower-women, donkeys; all collected for a season which lasts only about three months, after which everything is closed, and subsides into solitude, silence, and snow, described by the few residents as *comme la mort*. A band played in the garden to encourage us in our duty; and on Sundays a very mingled company came up from Clermont to listen. Squat, ugly, comfortable-looking *bourgeois*, dressed in hideous garments—“high fashion,” in large *bergère* hats, with a whole *panache* of feathers, or seven or eight red roses as big as saucers, and a simpering, conquering look under them inexpressibly comical: “Look at me, and learn; I am the pink of the fashion.” The gowns were of great-patterned tartans in red, yellow, and blue squares. French taste in dress is confined absolutely to Paris.

The tops of the houses belonging to the hotel below made a terrace for our apartments above, looking over the little gorge to the mountain beyond, seamed and scored with vineyards up to the bare rock; the common salon opened on this, but as the Frenchwomen would not allow a chink to be opened on the closest day, and, if the English surreptitiously let in a little air, rushed up and closed the window violently in their very faces, the room was hardly habitable.

We drove up the side of the volcano of Gravenoire, with peeps of the Puy-de-

Dôme, the great pride of the district; it is almost conical, one side quite inaccessible, and at the top are the remains of a temple of Mercury, with great flights of steps ascending at right angles,—a most striking place of worship of the “herald god new lighted on this heaven-kissing hill,” as his votaries would feel when they ascended the mountain. It has only lately been discovered, and a number of curious little images and tiles and pottery have been dug up in the excavations which are still being carried on.

We turned down a twisting, sandy lane among the vineyards in search of villages. Here and there was a tiny wood of old chestnuts, rows of great walnuts in full bearing; scraps of ground with hay or corn, minute beyond conception, lay in the midst of the vines; the *morcellement* was greater than even at Aix-les-Bains. A bit fifty yards by thirty looked quite large. If I asked the value of the land they laughed at the notion of a *hectare* ($2\frac{1}{2}$ acres); they bought it, they said, by the *toise*, six feet square—or a hundred *toises*, a *quartonnay*; a little bit here, a little bit there, very often at an hour's distance from each other, as they could get it. “Oh, no, not lying together; nobody had land lying together!” I spoke to a bettermost sort of a man who supplied the hotels with wine. He had ten acres, quite an estate—four hundred *âres*—all scattered up and down, just like the rest. A large piece together did not exist. I asked why they did not buy up or exchange so as to have their property under their hands. It was quite impossible; there is the greatest jealousy of each other, no one can bear his neighbor to be better off than himself. I heard of running up the price at an auction from sheer spite to twenty francs the *toise*. The fortunate buyer paid £20 for his scrap, for which he might get in a good year a pretty good percentage; in the last six years he would have had next to nothing. Last year the hail destroyed every grape on it—vine culture is the most gambling of crops. Our boy driver took our crazy carriage up and down the twisting tracks among the vineyards, which thrive in this black volcanic sand. The grapes were in very bad condition; the wet and the sunless summer had brought on the oidium, and it was melancholy to see the bunches dropping away black and mouldy, or with little berries not larger than peas. A month of fine weather was required to ripen what was left, which, poor people! this autumn never gave

them. We found one old woman cutting wretched stuff for her cow on a scrap of green among the vines; a young one gathering weeds by the roadside, thorns, thistles, etc., for hers. The milch cows do all the cart work, dragging manure, etc.; they lead a hard life, like the women, everywhere. An old woman was reaping, a young man acting chambermaid at — "The men do the light work themselves, and leave the heavy to their wives," said J.

We reached the village of Beauséjour at last, built in such a hole on the hill-side, that until we were close upon it, there was not so much as the top of the church tower to be seen. An impossibly barbarous place, the houses dropped about as animals or children might have done, built of black dismal stone, in the narrowest of alleys, twisting to and fro and without the smallest plan, no place where two carts could pass. We had to make the circuit of the whole village, as it was impossible to turn anywhere, even before the church, ending by the steepest of pitches as a wind-up. Heaps of manure lay in the street; dark, dirty, miserable cowsheds with muddy yards alternating with houses. A pleasant-looking woman, who had been for twenty years chambermaid at one of the hotels, showed us her house, part of one which had once been good in the old days before subdivision; she was preparing hemp which the *tisserand* would weave into a coarse cloth. She said that the snow lay thick on the ground from November till March, and they did not leave their houses much then. They never bought fuel, they burnt the vine-shoots, and picked up any bits they could find. "But you must suffer from cold?" "Oh, no, because we go into the stables with the cows," she said with great gusto. "Il y a là une si douce chaleur, it is so pleasant that one can't help nodding with sleep; the roof is boarded, and there is a little window, and when one comes out into the open air there is such a steam and it is like an oven," she ended with pride and enthusiasm.

Then she talked of her two children: "Mais les enfants d'aujourd'hui ça ne veut pas obéir, ça veut faire à son sou comme ils veulent, ils n'ont pas de foi non plus, pas comme de nos jours;" the golden age lies always behind the old.

In another house there was no window whatever, — only two panes, which did not open, over the doorway, — and no light or air unless the door was ajar. No shelf, press, or cupboard was to be seen,

and on the floor lay onions, dirty clothes, bread, sticks, and the indescribable remnants of never-stirred rubbish. One could not say the floor was "dirty as the ground," because out-of-doors the pure rain fell and cleared away the filth, whereas within no water was ever used by human hands, or indeed could be, unless the whole house had been turned out-of-doors. "Where do you sleep?" said I. "Oh, up there." There was no stair or opening of any kind. "But how do you get to it?" "By the street." She led the way up a steep path to the road above, by which we reached the higher level, where the bedroom opened. True, they must pass to bed through the cold and wet, but then they spared themselves the expense of a stair. The pleasures of spending her evening with her cow were insisted upon by this mistress also.

Another day we drove along the side of the hill on the great highway leading to the Mont Dore and the interior of Auvergne. The soil seemed so fertile that everything grew there together. Pear and apple trees, heavy with red and yellow fruit, as in a child's picture-book — great chestnuts; while literally under the trees grew patches of corn and potatoes; the vines here, however, were not good. "Combien vos pêches?" shouted our driver to a man who was gathering them in his orchard. "4d. for 25," replied he. "Mais c'est affreux ce que vous demandez!" was the answer as we drove on. Above our heads rose the lower slopes of the mountain thus richly clothed, and between the trees on the other side were beautiful views of the valley. It was an idyllic country, but the inhabitants were of the most dirty prose, without an exception as far as we saw. At the *table d'hôte* dinner the antagonism between north and south France came out strongly. "They are like two nations, and do not seem to love each other much," said I. "No, indeed," was the answer; "one may say indeed that there are four nations in France; and the eastern provinces towards Germany, and Brittany in the west, have as little sympathy as north and south."

I looked through the French newspapers every day; they were singularly jejune. There was very little about the war in Egypt, but much about the theatres and the last horrid (Fenayrou) murder, which was being dramatized "as," said the learned critic, "was done by Shakespeare in his *puissante ébauche*, 'A Yorkshire Tragedy!'" and again in 'Arden

of Feversham,' also by him, singulièrement puissante"!!!

The next day we drove to Beaumont, another little village-town in the midst of the vineyards. The houses were higher and of more pretension than the last, but the pavement was of large, loose stones, with a gutter in the middle of the street, and we were nearly jolted out of the carriage. The women sat gossiping and knitting in the roadway; there was no furniture in the dismal, dark houses, which did not seem to be intended to live in, but merely for sleeping and eating. We everywhere asked the number of children, the last census of France showing that the population is nearly stationary, and that it is diminishing in thirty-four rural departments; * that an average of three children to a family was the smallest that could keep up even the present numbers, and that even this is not now attained. Two children were more common than three—very often there was one. "Je n'en ai pas, à quoi bon avoir des enfants? Il faut vivre," was one cynical answer. One old woman had three sons and only four grandchildren. In one house only in all the country we found seven, and the woman said there was no such family in the place, that everybody wondered at her. The doctor told us that even four were very uncommon. We turned into the curious old twelfth-century church, with small, round-headed windows, thick walls, round pillars, with carved capitals, about the choir. Two old bodies were praying, one of whom whispered to me to go and look at "Nôtre Dame, with the dead Seigneur on her knees." "Que ça fait pleurer, ça fait pitié à voir." It was a rather ugly modern plaster group over a tawdry altar.

Round the fountain the women were standing, and we had some chat about the badness of the grapes—everybody liked a "crack." "Au revoir, madame!" they cried as we drove off. We stopped to talk to a man who was dressing the vines, in the sweat of his brow indeed; he looked ill and was low. "It was sad to see the way in which the crop was falling off, for there had been good promise. He should get little." "How do those live who have only land?" "Badly." For his part he was a *distillateur* from the *marc*

(the remains left when the grapes have been trampled and squeezed), so he had a weekly wage. If the phylloxera came they would all be ruined, and forced to *expatrier* themselves, which he seemed to consider the greatest possible misfortune for his children—very unlike an English or even Swiss father. The horror of the phylloxera is like that of the plague. One lady told me that she had sent peaches from near Paris wrapt in vine-leaves to her daughter-in-law at Frankfort. The young lady was summoned to the police-office, made to swear in writing that she was ignorant of the crime which had been committed, after which peaches, vine-leaves, and basket were solemnly burnt before her eyes. "Elle manqua de pleurer!"

We drove to Montferrand, once a fortified place, to see the fifteenth-century town-houses of the nobles, who then lived in the now demolished châteaux, and where Charles IX. had a small palace. Beautiful spiral stone staircases in corner towers, as at Blois, either with pillars or ascending windows, with wonderfully delicate mouldings, led to arched open corridors, with elaborate groinings and keystones, communicating with the *piano nobile*. They were as solid and perfect as when built three hundred years and more ago, and looked fit to last for centuries more. Here and there were fine, old, high reliefs—Adam and Eve, and a serpent with a woman's head, carved in the black lava, which cuts as true as a cameo. The art was perfect. In these the *cultivateurs* of the neighborhood were squatting—it could not be called living, with scarcely any furniture but heaps of dirt, partitions cutting up the beautiful courts and rooms in which they huddled, blocking the windows, bringing everywhere squalor and nastiness, living like animals. It was a strange sight. The world has gained a good many things in three hundred years—liberty, and knowledge, and interests and thoughts of all kinds to live for; but in what were the begging crew that hung round us the better for what it had won? The old French nobles were a quick-witted, artistic, intelligent race, who misused their gifts it is true, and threw away their opportunities, but for whom there were great possibilities of virtues, great openings, as with the Chevalier Bayard, whereas these their actual successors, squalid, ignorant, narrow and dirty, seem to have no object but to put by many sous, and are imperilling the future of France by a diminishing

* "Il y a moins de naissances en France que dans les autres pays de l'Europe." The calculation is made from the beginning of the century when the diminution of the proportion of births to deaths began. Some statisticians consider that the "phénomène tient au loi de partage forcé." (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, June, 1882.)

population, in order to carry out their ideal of having only sufficient children to enable them all to be kept at home, and succeed to the wretched little property, to continue as squalid, as ignorant, as narrow and unintelligent as their parents. There could hardly be a more dismal sight. I sat drawing the wonderfully perfect arch, surrounded by a herd of little girls, comfortably dressed, each shouting that *she* had seen the carriage first, and had exclusive right to the penny for showing us the way up the alley. The begging was disgraceful. They belonged to a nuns' school, and I bade them tell their mistress how shocked the strangers were. They nearly devoured J— when she brought out the coveted sous. We appealed to three old women sitting in their caps in the street as usual, though it rained, but I could get little help from them. A distribution of sous would evidently not have been unpleasant in their own cases. One of them took me into her house, belonging also to "the *vieux temps*, when the place was full of nobles." There was hardly a table or press; all was dirty as usual, and empty but for a great cask. The old husband came in from his vineyard. He said he could not work in the rain. He counted on thirty to fifty *pots de vin*, containing two bottles each, for a *quartouay* (which is not much above the twentieth part of an acre). We heard afterwards that one hundred and eighty-four gallons per acre is the average production of France. One old woman had two children, another three, the next only one, but there were four grandchildren. The old man said his two sons were married, "et nous leur avons donné à chacun du pain et du vin," *i.e.*, a bit of corn ground and of vineyard each, but the old people had great difficulty in living on the diminished remainder in such a year. It seemed strange that they should despoil themselves for the sake of young, strong men.

The house belonging to Charles IX. proved to be very handsome, with the same spiral stair carvings, and coats of arms over an archway in the street. As we passed out, a sweet, gentle old woman came up. "Ah, vous admirez ma maison! Yes, it is mine, but I have given it to my son." As she spoke, a cross, disagreeable young woman looked out of the portal and called to her in a loud, rude voice to come in. "What was she doing out there, keeping them waiting in that way?" The old lady looked frightened, broke up her talk with us directly, and hurried in.

It was evidently a King Lear story. J— told me of such another. Her aunt and uncle possessed a farm; the son, a weak, young man, married the servant — *bonne travailleuse* but with a temper. She took possession of the situation, and the poor old mistress was entirely thrown aside, and not allowed to take so much as an apple without leave. In another case the widow had the *jouissance* of the whole house; her three sons married and brought in their wives; the sisters-in-law quarrelled, one pair went away, the house was divided between the other two, and the mother was thrust into a room with a smoky chimney, so that she had to keep the door open all winter, or have her eyesight injured, though the whole place was legally hers. The living of several families in one house does not succeed in any country.

I sat by a clever, sharp, cynical old lady, a widow with property near Bordeaux, who talked of the ravages of the phylloxera which is ruining the Medoc. I questioned her as to the excessive *morcellement*. Michelet declares that the peasants throw obstacles in the way of any one who attempts to unite the small morsels of land. She gave the same evidence, and added that the jealousy amongst them of any one rising above the others was excessive. She told me of old French memoirs of Francis I.'s time and later. "There are queer stories in them." I said that it was at least a comfort that the world had made progress since then. "Vous trouvez, madame? and in what respect, s'il vous plait?" in her most sarcastic tones. "We are more civilized in the sense of being less cruel; mais quant aux mœurs! there is not a pin to choose between that time and this. I was *à même* to know a good deal about the emperor's court, and I can tell you nothing could be worse, a curiosity of evil." "But the respectable people at Paris are many." "You had better not look too close; and *you* are just as bad." "No," I declared; "there is a fast, fashionable set whose misdeeds are all known, but the mass of the upper class in England are respectable to the core." "Ah! but then you marry to please yourselves, and know the girl you are to live with. How can you expect people to be faithful to each other who have often never met till all is settled, and know it is a pure matter of business between the parents?" She felt the point even curiously and strongly. The peasant marriages are as mercenary or more so, depending on the

amount of land which each can bring to the bargain.

Next day we drove to a hamlet high up near the Puy-de-Dôme, taking the doctor's little boy with us to show us some *intérieurs*. The view up the zigzags of the mountain road, with the immense plain stretching far to the north, speckled with villages, spurs of promontories running out into it, formed a very striking sight—no trees but fruit trees grew below; quite on the summit were some small firs.

We went into the house of a *nourrice*, where the baker from Clermont sent his children. "What could his wife do? she could not attend to her business and keep her baby!" To have a little maid as in England was quite out of the case. We entered a large stable, with a central stone pillar and vaulted roof, which the owners had built themselves; on one side were three cows, on the other two wooden beds in one frame against the wall, with a couple of cradles and a cot; the sheets tolerably clean; the floor without an attempt at a pavement of any kind; filthy, to a degree not describable, with the cows' litter, the chickens' dirt, a quantity of old bits of wood, broken boxes lying in the corner, with the chest for corn, while the clothes hung on ropes in the midst of the disorder. There was no press, no cupboard or shelf to be seen—one little window near the beds. Presently there was a wailing sound in the darkness, and the nurse took up a child and dandled it kindly; it looked sickly and small and cross; then out of another scrambled a fine strapping boy of two years old. "I took him from the first day he was born and brought him up from Clermont." The whole was so strange, and the Rembrandt effect so striking, that I sat on a three-legged stool just inside of the door and tried to draw. The chickens came under my petticoats, scratching in the manure; a pig grunted outside just behind me; the fleas jumped cheerfully (and agreeably to themselves I have no doubt) on my hand in the open. The instincts of civilization were too strong, and I came to an end, dead beat. Three sheep were taking an afternoon walk with her boy: she had (as usual) three children. They all slept summer and winter in the dark and horrible discomfort from choice; she had a room up-stairs which they let, and a small kitchen with a fireplace for cooking only. They possessed cows, pigs, sheep, poultry, besides receiving pay for the room and the children; but they preferred to live thus like brute beasts in

order to save fuel. No book or paper was to be seen, indeed there was no light whereby they could have been read. Anything more ugly socially I never saw. We went into several other houses, the cow arrangements of which were just the same; in one, however, the woman said they only slept in the stable in winter. She also had nurse children. Another had just lost a baby which fell into boiling water while she was away at work; it had lived twenty four hours in agony, "quite skinned." No doctor is ever sent for or thought of, said Dr. P., except for fractures; the people die or get well, as happens. They never wash, except hands and face at the fountain, from January 1st to December 31st, and such a thing as a basin or jug was never anywhere to be seen. That respectable tradesmen should choose to have their children brought up in the intolerable barbarism of such a life, for any consideration whatever, was almost incredible.

My French neighbors at the *table d'hôte* showed no surprise at what I told of the cottages. "How is it then with you?" I said to a lady from Brittany. "Hommes, femmes, et bêtes, tout ça vit pêle-mêle," said she. "How is it in Touraine?" I asked another lady. "Oh no, they do not live in the cowsheds," said she, "only in the stables, and there is generally a little off-place where they sleep." There seemed little difference in this respect in the different parts of France. The most well-doing country life was said to be in Normandy, where the subdivision was not great and many tenant farms remained. Here homesteads with "trente bêtes à cornes" existed, and enough land lay together to allow it to be properly cultivated.

A high level railway of thirty miles, with a viaduct across our Royat valley and steep curves above our heads, to the baths of Mont Dore and the hill districts beyond, had last year been opened; "chemin de fer de l'état." There had been two bad falls of earth to begin with; "they acknowledged three men were killed and thirteen wounded, so you may judge how many more there must have been, for government never tells." This year the delays were incessant. "We can drive to the Mont Dore in four hours, and the rail takes three hours and three-quarters, and twenty minutes of carriage after that," chuckled the driver. Wiser men than these declared that a State railway near: bad construction, bad service, and complete disregard of the convenience

of travellers. The advantages of a State proprietorship of English lines was certainly not borne out by what we heard of its conduct in France.

The French companies do not err by over-consideration for the wants of passengers. On the great artery from Paris to Lyons and the south there were only the two early and the two late trains; the *rapide* at midday ceased on the 15th September, because *étrangers* were gone, and it might not possibly be filled by natives. No second-class passenger was allowed in first-class trains, and it was said that unless the French lines reformed their ways, there was great danger of the Germans, in connection with the St. Gothard Tunnel, carrying off a great part of the traffic to Italy and the East.

We crept up the long zigzag road behind the Puy-de-Dôme leading to Fontana, crossing the little mountain line twice. "Ah!" said our driver, "how it has terrified the old women! One of them from a mountain village ran home half dead with fright, saying she had seen a line of black cars drawn by nothing, and it must have been the devil in person driving, for she saw him vomiting fire and smoke in front."

Not far off we came upon a solitary little chapel. "Il paraît que cette Vierge a beaucoup de vertus, elle est très puissante — on vient de tous côtés to entreat her." There was another in the Clermont cathedral, evidently a separate person, hung round with all sorts of offerings, "very powerful." A black edition occupied another chapel. This variety is generally very old and particularly efficacious, being probably a survival of the idols formed of meteoric stones, like "the image of Diana of the Ephesians descended from heaven."

The devil and the Virgin are the great objects of fear and adoration among the peasants, the remainder of the hierarchy of heaven is comparatively unimportant. But, if help is not to be had from one potentate, even a saint does not disdain to take it from the other, as may be seen in the story of St. Kado. He had entreated "Madame la Vierge" to obtain a bridge for him over a certain ill-conditioned river. "La ménagère du paradis," however, replied that such things did not concern women, "et qu'il fallait en parler à la Trinité." The rest of the story must be given in French, for the pronouns are untranslatable. "La Trinité, qui avait toute sorte de considération pour St. Kado, répondit qu'elle ne pouvait pas lui

accorder sa demande, parceque les saints de la Brétagne la ruinaient en miracles, et que les anges, qu'elle aurait pu y employer, étaient occupés ailleurs." St. Kado, thus rejected, turned to the devil, "who has always been considered an excellent mason," and "asked for his plans and conditions." Satan drew an admirable bridge on red paper. And then comes the ordinary story of the compact, by which he was to have the first soul that passed the bridge, and how he was cheated by a black cat driven over by the saint. And one cannot help taking the devil's side, who has honestly completed his bargain, and is defrauded by the wiles of the holy man, rather indecently.

We came on a queer proof of the Virgin's power at Beauséjour. A large stone out-door stair led to an upper chamber, but the top stone had fallen, and there was no communication above. "What has happened?" said I to the bleary-eyed mistress, who sold wine and very unsavoury-looking *comestibles*. "Oh," answered she, "at the *fête patronale* of Notre Dame six weeks back, we had a ball up here," (the ball must have been "limited," for the room could hardly have been fourteen feet square), "and they were quarrelling, seven or eight of them, out on the balcony, when it all came down together. Mathieu had his leg broken, and Georgette's arm, and the rest were shaken, but nobody was killed, par la grâce de Notre Dame, parceque c'était sa fête." It was certainly very kind of her, for these votaries squabbling in her honor were hardly creditable disciples.

We went to another *fête patronale* a few days after, expecting to see some church processions and dancing of national *bouffées*, at a small town a few miles off. We crawled along the vineyard lanes, with lovely rose-colored mountain pinks fringing the banks, to Beaumont, which looked rather dirtier and drearier than before, the women sitting in the streets at one end of the village, the men at the other. The road leading from a place of fifteen hundred inhabitants to one of three thousand was like the bed of a torrent, great stones as big as one's head with the soil washed away between. It behoved the communes to keep the by-roads, but it was evident that nothing had ever been done by any commune anywhere since the towns existed, though the stones literally encumbered the ways. As we jolted slowly along, with a number of folk strolling to the fête, men and women generally separate, I saw a blouse

shouting the "Marseillaise" very discordantly as he walked. "What is the matter with him?" said I to the driver. "Qu'est ce qu'il a, ce monsieur?" replied he. "Il est soûlé." "Is there much drinking?" "Well, the *cabarets* are full enough on Sunday." The statistics of drinking are not very satisfactory, but it is difficult to get drunk on this thin red wine. "It is *les richards* only who drink brandy." Presently we reached Aubières, where in a long *place*, houses on one side, trees on the other, stood a line of booths and merry-go-rounds, fortune-telling going on in one, a beast or two and acrobats in the others; bobbing for apples, a greased pole—the whole like a very shabby, ugly fair in England. The people were marching up and down staring at each other, doing nothing, seeing nothing, quiet, dull, and contented. Presently a sort of club feast procession, with an ugly flag, "*Les enfants d'Aubières*" on it, marched through with music. That was all the amusement we saw. On balconies and outside stairs sat the *bourgeoisie* of the town in state, looking on, dressed in pale blue and lilac silk, with much white lace, and droll travesties of Paris fashions. It was a lugubrious sight, and this was the one festival of the year. Over a very ugly-looking cabaret was a placard announcing a ball for the evening, else there was no sign of dancing—no costumes but the white caps, with a broad riband, and blouses of shining plum-colored calico, and large felt hats. Anything more vulgar, duller, emptier I never saw. The intelligent man of whom one is ever in search here turned up; he said that half the vine crop was lost already by the disease. The poorer people had some of them two or three *âres* each, the fortieth part of an acre, and worked at day work, earning forty sous a day; there would be great distress among these. His little boy did not like his father's delay in talking to me. He was crying violently, because they had put cognac in his coffee *pour jouer*, and was very cross. When his father stopped, and he could not get on, he flew into a passion, and took up a stone to throw at his father, who only laughed. The spoiling of children in France is great.

The extraordinary disregard for the value of time in the peasant economy is most remarkable. Thirty or forty women from the villages east of Clermont and Royat, and still more from the mountain hamlets, went in to the town every morning during summer. First, the detach-

ments with milk; then groups each with a basket on her head, carrying eggs, peaches, butter, pears, a cauliflower, and some haricots, whatever, in short, was in season; many of them walking six or seven miles. They are so suspicious of each other that no one can trust her neighbor to do her work, and the little "higgler," so useful in our English country life, buying up the produce, and taking it into town, saving the utterly unnecessary labor, waste of shoe-leather and time, and leaving the house-mother to look after her children and her household, is impossible here for want of confidence.

The waste of time for the men, who spend half the day in going up and down, working at ten or twelve scraps of land, many of them an hour's walk apart (as we are constantly told) is incredible. A vineyard requires constant care, and the fifteen or sixteen processes, detailed to us by an old vine-dresser, are long in carrying out; it cannot be left without incessant attention from February to October, when a bad week may ruin all. Every day we met processions of basket carts, so small as to be quite a curiosity, sometimes fifteen or sixteen following each other, drawn by milch cows, who often go twenty miles in the day, their milk being diminished accordingly, sometimes to about seven or eight pints a day. They were carrying wood or potatoes or hay down to sell, and bringing back manure. Oxen walk slowly enough, but a cow's pace is hardly moving at all, and to see the thin beasts crawling slowly up the steep hills, each with a man attending, was strange indeed. One good-sized wagon with three horses would have carried the whole lot at once in less than a quarter of the time; but here each man prefers to wear out his own strength and that of his cows at his own pleasure; co-operation seemed quite impossible.

Again, the corn was put up temporarily in little round cocks of about fifty sheaves from the time it is reaped until October. "Why is it not housed or stacked?" said I. "There was not enough on any one little field to stack, and as for the barns there is no room; the cows must eat up the hay, and we must wait for the second crop, *le regain*." A few days after this it rained heavily; the cocks were completely wetted through, and the men were occupied in pulling them to pieces, and drying the sheaves (which must have shed much of their grain in the process), and putting them up again, perhaps not for the last time before their final housing in October.

But they did as their fathers had done, and probably will to the end of the chapter, wasting their hard-earned produce.

In a corn patch was an old woman reaping alone; the field was small, but the laborer dismally out of proportion — bad weather in the sky. In a little barn we found three men with flails beating out the (handful of) corn in measured time; further on, we came on a hodman without a hod, carefully building up ten or twelve bricks which he hoisted on his shoulder with a jerk and carried slowly up the ladder to the top of the wall. These relics of a time of leisure strike English eyes as very curious.

The enormous price given for the land is almost incredible. The banker spoke of a thousand francs for an *âre*, the fortieth part of an acre, for good vineyard ground, and eight francs or ten was the common price which we heard of on every turn for the *toise*, two yards square. As there have been now five or six indifferent grape years in succession, the peasants cannot get one per cent. for their money; no wonder the number of peasant owners of vineyards is diminishing, as the census showed. The expenses of the transfer of land are ruinous to small proprietors. M. Dufaure has vainly tried to get them altered, but the Republican Chamber has more interesting questions on hand. "In a sale of real property under a thousand francs half the value is absorbed; under five hundred the confiscation is complete."*

Royat was beginning to grow chill; the great wave of cold which crossed mid-Europe in September, covering the passes of the Alps with snow, drowning the Tyrol and north Italy, had also caught Auvergne. The Puy-de-Dôme was quite white, winter had begun on the mountains of the Mont Dore, and our last drives were gloomy. Whenever we left the high road we sank into a quagmire, and the lanes between the substantial stone buildings of the hamlet of Fontana were everywhere one sheet of filth, mud, and manure. We tried to get to a house with a peculiarly abominable mode of bedding — one tier over the other, like berths in a cabin, affixed to the wall with wooden doors. You scrambled up on a great *coffre*, and so climbed to number one, but it required a sailor's agility to reach the rest. "Figurez-vous having to examine a patient thus perched!" said the doctor, The great wooden cradle is hoisted up at

night on the *coffre*, and the mother lies in bed with a string, rocking it. It had begun to rain, and the narrow road to the house was a torrent of mud and water.

We turned on to another house, or rather stable, on the lowest side of a sort of yard, which swam in dirt. Bits of rock cropped up in every direction; they had literally only to break them up to pave it. It is always supposed that ownership gives a reason for and a pride in carrying out any little improvements and beautifications of a dwelling, but if the level of civilization of a place does not demand these little amenities they are not made. This year H — pulled down an old cottage and built a new one in its stead, and a number of half bricks and bits of stone lay about, belonging to the old walls. The tenants (monthly at 1s. a week) of two cottages behind (with leave), paved their back doors with these odds and ends. Their front doors were paved already, but the new cottage had a paved back door, and they would not be behind the new standard of comfort.

"Will you allow us to enter, madame? to see inhabited stables is new to us," said I to the mistress. She took it as a compliment to their superior advantages, and received us courteously. The ground inside was like that without, only a little less wet; the arrangements were the same as at the last hamlet, and it was curious to find so very original a type reproduced exactly: the same stone pillar in the centre, supporting the wide vaulted roof; the two beds, heels to heads, in one frame as before, only here were seven cows ranged against the wall. There was only a glazed hole by way of a window that did not open, and light and air came in by the distant door. The heat even on this chill day was great, but a poor old woman in one of the beds, very ill, was shivering all over, and complaining of the cold; she wore only a knitted shift, and her clothes were heaped over her; it was very pathetic to see her helpless look amidst the dark filth, the bed shut in on three sides, which never could be shaken up or cleaned from biting beasts, without a fireplace and in the cheerless, airless confusion. "She is my mother; it all belongs to her — mais enfin c'est à nous. Would you like to look in here?" went on the woman, doing the honors and opening a door into perfect darkness. As I followed her ruefully, urged on by the interests of science, five or six large geese rushed out past her legs and nearly overset me. Here there was not the

* *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Aug. 1882.

smallest opening of any kind, but she undid the upper half of the door, and I saw there a horse, a sick calf, and the place for the fowls — here were two more beds, "for the men," *i.e.*, her husband and a farm boy. The smell and dirt were so intolerable that I hardly dared step into the place. Everywhere was the bare earth, or rather mud. This was by far the largest and richest homestead that we saw, and (perhaps because there was more of it) it looked more wretchedly dirty than the rest. Nowhere else did we see seven cows, or a horse, or a servant. "And you sleep here summer and winter?" said I. "Bien sûr, it is so warm and nice." Two little girls came rushing in, her only children. The old woman called out to know whether we would have some milk (to buy)? "It belongs to her," said the daughter. The horrible discomfort was not the effect of poverty; it was the deliberate choice of wretched squalor, the utter want of any feeling for decency or comfort, or any object in life but to save fuel, that made the place so painful. The archangel Gabriel himself could not have cleaned the stables without a miracle. As none of them are paved, water could only have made the earth dirtier, and as for sweeping, the mass of beams of wood, sticks, old boxes, etc., mixed with manure, which filled up the corners where the dirt and creeping things accumulated in peace, rendered this out of possibility.

The food everywhere is the universal soup of onions, cabbage, lard, or "un plat de légumes au lard, avec une petite friandise telle qu'une salade," or black radishes sliced, as described by Edmond About, in his "Honnête homme."

The roads were so bad that we never got beyond the circle within which the peasants sent produce into the towns, but the doctor told us that the poverty and barbarism in the higher villages were excessive. Wherever the peasants depend upon the land alone, the poverty and low standard were at the lowest, we heard, in all parts of France. Wherever there was some *industrie* going on, by which they could gain wages, the standard of civilization rose, the ignorance was less, and the wants of the population greater.

We drove on through a beautiful wild gorge with many sugar-loaf hills rising in every direction — the Puy-de-Pariou, the Puy-de-Dôme — to another of these strange dwelling-places, for I was anxious to see a great number of houses and be sure that such a state of things was not exceptional. We ploughed on through

sloughs of mud, and stopped before a row of stable-houses. They were inferior to the last, with no central pillar, although the roof was vaulted to keep in the heat; "it was better in winter, and safer from fire," — built by their fathers. Here the beds were close to the door, instead of at the farther end — less privacy (!), but more air — two on each side, always joined together, of the same pattern, with a paved narrow passage lying between them just broad enough for the cows to pass into their beds within, with no partitions. "Surely it is hot here in summer." "Oh, no; except, perhaps, in August, and then we open the upper half of the door. We like it. We have a kitchen next door, and one up-stairs, only it is let; but when the soup is cooked, we bring it in here to eat, on that *coffre*, because it is so comfortable!" There were four nurse children from Clermont, brought up in this filth and barbarism, and one grandchild of her own: "Her father died four months and her mother three weeks ago — she counts now as a child of my own," said the mistress. She had three children, and only four grandchildren; her cows gave about six litres each; they worked hard in the carts all day, *bien sûr*. Often for two months the snow is so deep that in the mountain hamlets they do not leave the house at all. They bake *des tourtes* of rye bread to last a month; it does not dry up, like wheat bread, but it does become mouldy. A pig is killed sometimes, and they go on every day upon him till they have finished him. They have cheese, cabbages, and carrots sometimes stored, but the ground is so hard that they can scarcely dig them out in winter.

The tops of the hills are sometimes bare, sometimes clothed with scrubby wood; "they generally belong to the communes, who allow rights of pasturage, or sell the wood." "Sometimes the communes divide the lands among themselves." "Which do you think best?" "Oh, to divide." "But then you lose the wood." "Ah, but it is so good to have one's own bit, however small!" here spoke the true spirit of peasant proprietorship. The forests had been almost all destroyed, when government some twenty-five years ago insisted on their being replanted. "The communes were furious, but when they found how good it was to have the wood, they were pacified," said the driver. "Louis Napoleon did many evil things, but he was quite right about the forests; it was his hobby." "Yes," he said, "we are not so well off

under the Republic as *sous nos vieux rois*." He did not say "emperor," however. "Le commerce ne va pas — rien ne marche. Les richards ne veulent pas risquer leur argent — when it is so uncertain what will come next — et c'est très mauvais pour les pauvres." This was the general cry. Every bad season and difficulty in France is always laid to the door of the government of the day, whatever this may happen to be; but there was certainly no tenderness for the Republic among the peasants whom we saw. *Rentes* have gone down now for two years, always of course a great source of unpopularity. If there is a change, however, of which the air was full of rumor, the new *régime* will be as unpopular as the present in a few years. "C'est du sable," says M. de Tocqueville.

"La monarchie, l'aristocratie, la république, are each good to make a great State; but our government is none of the three, c'est simplement du chaos."

A close day, when we longed for the fresh air of the mountain. The distances were all veiled, but the great mass of red houses of Clermont, crowned by the high black lava cathedral, with its pierced windows and stern towers, is very striking wherever it is seen. Many of the villages might have been considered as isolated by bad roads; but the worst we have seen lay barely three miles from the town, and not four hundred yards from the magnificent highway running through Auvergne. We drove up a walnut avenue to a side valley, where stood a congeries of the dirtiest, darkest, most miserable of human habitations; space seemed as valuable as in the city of London; the ways between the houses were impassably narrow — dunghills at every turn, steep ascents and purposeless descents, houses dropped anyhow — most curious. We went up some steps, where sat two women, in a couple of rooms, not bad in size, but in the same state of indescribable filth. The houses were very old, and had apparently never been cleaned or even swept since they were built. Whitewash seems never to have been heard of; a bed lay on the floor, round which the chickens were disputing themselves; the cow was underneath in the stable. "And do you often sit with her?" "Bien sûr, it is very comfortable, and saves fuel; there are often eight or ten of us." "Do the men come?" "Oh, no; they have been working in the fields, in the *intempéries* of the weather, and they all go to bed." "But so have you." "We sit there filant,

tricotant, till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, et raccommoquant des chemises." "Et faisant la causette," I put in. She laughed. "But it is rather hard, if you have been in the fields all day, to watch half the night." She laughed again.

I said we kept our cows for milking. "But how do you manage for carts?" "We have horses." "Ah, we can't afford horses. Je suppose qu'en Angleterre vous êtes si riches que vous n'avez que des châteaux." "No," said J —; "there are plenty of cottages, but they keep them cleaner." "How can we keep our houses clean? We go to market carrying the milk and the eggs and the fruit every day. We are out in the fields; we can't do everything." Poor souls! no wonder.

Accordingly they are stunted, ugly, often with *goîtres* from drinking snow-water; the pretty children gradually developed into old women, sometimes hardly human-looking in their repulsive frightfulness. In one village an old bear-eyed mad woman was shuffling in great sabots, screeching as she went past us — no one taking any notice. The peasant women are greatly oppressed in France, yet still the marketing gives them a certain power, which is shown in all classes alike. In one sense a Frenchwoman holds her own among rich and poor. There is a legend of the widowed châtelaine of the fine old feudal castle of Tournoud which we saw in the distance, perched like a vulture's nest on a spur of the mountain running into the plain, who held her fierce men-at-arms in stern order, and when she sent them out on a marauding expedition mounted to a donjon-tower and sat there, *à califourchon*, on the battlements, drinking *eau-de-vie* and watching their work from afar. Rights in feudal times of *péage*, *pontage*, etc., had been granted by the king to the nobles on condition that they kept the roads, fords, etc., in order. Instead of which they neglected the ways, and came down for the dues on the merchants going from town to town, or pilgrims to some cathedral shrine, and, when the spoil proved insufficient, carried off prisoners who were kept at ransom in the dungeons. The vassals in the village below Tournoud took refuge with their flocks and herds in the great castle yard, and in return cultivated the lands of the seigneurs, but the oppression was often great. There were no nobles in France who won rights for the people as well as for themselves in a Magna Charta, no large-acred squires, who had been the head and heart of resistance to the en-

croachments of the sovereign, as in the Parliaments of Charles I., fighting not for their own privileges, but the liberties of the nation; and the pleasant friendly feeling which grew up in England between the great house and cottage is simply non-existent in France.

Our last drive was to the village of washerwomen, three miles from Clermont. The road lay up the usual steep hillside, with its rich vegetation — chestnuts and walnuts in full bearing above, corn and vineyards below. The village was in a hole, as usual, down one steep path and up another, when we came suddenly on a hundred women in an irregular bit of ground — it could not be called a *place* — with narrow alleys where no cart could go leading out of it at every imaginable angle. An immense crucifix, backed by the mountain beyond, the remains of a mediæval fortress and tower, overlooked a moving mass of women washing in the stream which comes from the lava torrent issuing out of the Puy-de-Parieu. The water flowed from two little arches under a house, and divided into two streams, with a narrow promontory between them, meeting again at the road. Four rows of women lined the shores, the middle rows back to back, each kneeling in a three-sided box, open behind, with a black stone in the water before her, on which she beat the linen with a wooden paddle. I never saw anything more curiously barbarous; the waste of power of the women, who could only work by throwing themselves forward on their knees, and stooping into the water, a position which no back could preserve for more than a few minutes at a time; the treatment of the poor linen, which never was touched by hot water, but had its dirt beat out of it by main force; the state of the water, which, although clear when it left the source, reached the lower washerwomen perfectly black with dirt, and soapy to a degree which would not be pleasant to think of for the owners of clothes far down the file of performers.

I sat drawing on the road below, to the great delight of the company. "Elle fait tous nos portraits!" "Not all," said I; "why, you must be fifty." "Plus de cent," cried the general voice. "What time do you begin?" and the chorus replied together, "Six o'clock, and we work till dark, and sometimes by torchlight." "What, in winter?" "Winter and summer; this water never freezes." They wore very clean white caps, a handkerchief, generally yellow, crossed over their

skirts, and a cotton gown — nothing picturesque in detail, but a wonderfully queer and quaint scene altogether. They must be constantly wet, raising great masses of wrung-out linen on their backs and round their necks to carry away, when they begin a fresh pile, which was tied up generally in striped blue bales, lying in the rear of the settlement. *Les bonnes familles* at Clermont and elsewhere only wash twice a year; it is a proof of gentility, and that you have a great supply of linen. "Oh, no, we never use hot water, or wash in the house."

"En voilà a centre of gossip for the whole neighborhood," said M — afterwards. "Figurez-vous une jeune fille qui se marie! quel cancan! comme elle est mise en pièces par cent voix à la fois!"

The rain falls on the sandy, volcanic soil, and sinks in; there are curiously few streams to be seen, but the water flows under the tongues of lava which run from all the old craters, works itself a channel outward, and comes out where the lava ends.

We never saw the smallest flower near or in any house of all the many we visited; not even the wallflower and nasturtiums, which abound even in ragged hovels in England; not a white jessamine or china rose against the wall. Flowers are considered as things to sell, like onions, and in the nursery gardens near Royat and Clermont, where the roses are hawked in bunches about the streets, a few are grown between the haricots and the carrots. What beautiful things the climate would afford I saw one day, in a cascade of the orange trumpet flowers of the bignonia, long wreaths of which were trailing over a stone *portail* of what had probably been an old villa.

Not a book or a paper were ever to be found; not a print or picture against any wall, in the houses where there were walls (of course in the stables there were only rough partitions); not a bit of china, not an ornament, not a piece of good furniture or a clock, the prides of an English cottage. It was impossible to conceive life so absolutely bare of interest, or amusement, or comfort, or refinement of any kind.

In England thrift appears to be a great virtue; one to be inculcated on every occasion upon our people. Here one hates the very mention of it. It is an end; they do not work to live, they live for the sake of working to lay by; they grudge every penny they spend, even for the most important necessities. There is

never a respite when they have amassed enough; with ten thousand francs laid by among the town people of Aubières, said M——, the women go every day to Clermont with their baskets on their heads to gain a few sous (and to gossip). The sordid, filthy, hideous existence which is the result of all this saving and self-denial, the repulsive absence of any ideal but that of "de cacher des petits sous dans de grands bas," as an object for life, is incredible if it is not seen and studied. There is so great a jealousy of any man rising above the rest that the equality in the villages is nearly absolute, and the level of taste and civilization sinks to the capacity of the lowest; any advance on this is regarded as pride and absurdity. There was absolutely no house in any of the villages where the chief farmers, the lawyer, the doctor, and the clergyman showed a higher standard of refinement, information, and comfort; all was squalor and ignorance alike—even the priest was a peasant like the rest.

And this is the state of society which, with great expense, trouble, and care, we are about to try and introduce for the regeneration of Ireland—without even her possession of any of the conditions which enable the French peasant to get on at all,—i.e., his extraordinary powers of thrift, his unwearied industry (and that which he compels from his wife and children), and finally the climate, enabling an amount and a variety of produce to be raised, utterly impossible in our northern districts.

If "truth, goodness, and beauty" be the objects of life worth living for, to be sought after, however imperfectly, by all classes, each after their lights and opportunities, if "the cares of livelihood must not absorb the mind, taming all impulse, clogging all flights, depressing the spirit with a base anxiety, smothering social intercourse, destroying men's interest in each other, and making friendship impossible,"* then indeed there can be no arrangements of living, no ideal of society more utterly mistaken than that of the peasant proprietors as we have now watched them closely in the south and middle of France—with no higher object than the old stocking or the buying of some infinitesimal corner of land, with no care for politics, for art, for education, or anything outside their own narrow range of vision, and with no hope of improvement for the race in future, as their chil-

dren will perpetuate apparently in *sæcula sæculorum* the life in which they now spend their dismal existence.

F. P. VERNEY.

From Blackwood's Magazine.

THE LADIES LINDORES.

CHAPTER XXX.

IT was late when John Erskine got home on the afternoon of this eventful day. John Tamson's wife mended his coat for him, and he got himself brushed and put in order; then his excitement calming down, he walked slowly home. He argued with himself as he walked, that to take any further notice of Torrance's violence would be unworthy of himself. The fellow had been drinking, no doubt. He had been stung in his tenderest point—his pride in his fine house and tawdry grandeur,—he had felt himself altogether out of place in the little company, which included his nearest connections. Not much wonder, poor wretch, if he were twisted the wrong way. John forgave him as he grew calmer, and arriving at home, tired out, and somewhat depressed in mind, began at last to feel sorry for Pat Torrance, who never had been framed for the position he held. The first thing he found when he arrived, to his alarm and dismay, was a telegram from Beaufort announcing his arrival that very night. "Obliged to come; cannot help myself," his friend said, apologetic even by telegraph. Nothing could well have been more unfortunate. John felt as if this arrival must put a gulf between him and Carry's family altogether—but it was too late now for any alteration, even if he could have, in the circumstances, deserted his friend. Perhaps, too, in the crisis at which he had arrived, it would be well for him to have some one upon whom he could fall back, some one who had been more unfortunate than himself, to whom he could talk, who would understand without explanation, the extraordinary crisis to which his history had come. It was not his doing, nor Edith's doing,—they had not sought each other: no intention had been in her mind of making a victim of her rural neighbor; no ambitious project in his, of wooing the earl's daughter. Everything had been innocent, unwitting. A few meetings, the most innocent, simple intercourse—and lo! the woe or weal of two lives was concerned. It seemed hard that so simply,

* Seeley.

with so little foresight, a man might mar his happiness. John was not a sentimentalist, determining that his whole existence was to be shattered by such a disappointment. He repeated to himself, with a little scorn,—

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart.

But the scorn was of the sentiment, and not any protest against the application of it to his own case. The broken tie between Beaufort and Carry was not an example of that superficial poetic deliverance. He himself was not like Beaufort, nor Edith like her sister. She would never marry a man whom she could not love; nor would he allow himself to dally with all the objects of life, and let everything slip past him. But he knew what would happen, he said to himself in the quietness of the silent hours. Life would lose its crown altogether. He would "get on" as if nothing remarkable had befallen him—but the glory and the joy would be over without ever having been his. And if she shared his feelings, there would be the same result on her side,—her life would be lonely like his, the flower of existence would be stolen from her. Only—if it were possible that Edith did share his feelings, then there was still something to be done,—there was a fight for it still before them. He would not give in like Beaufort, nor she take any irremediable step of desperation like Carry. This stirred him a little and restored him to himself; but on the whole, despondency was his prevailing feeling—a sense of impossibility, the sensation as of a blank wall before him, which it was impossible to surmount.

He had a lonely, dreary evening. His dinner was served to him by one of the maids, who was frightened and lost her head, Rolls still being absent, to the great alarm of the household. Bauby, who did not remember the time when her brother had thus forsaken his duties, had been so disturbed in her preparations by anxiety, that it had almost happened to John as to King Louis, that he had to wait for his meal. "I canna gie my mind to my denner. Whaur's Tammas?—and who's to take ben the dishes?" Bauby cried. When the housemaid, arrayed in her best cap and apron, and with what she herself called "a red face," blushing like a peony in the unusual responsibility and honor, had managed to fulfil the service of the table, Bauby went out to the kitchen-door and then to the avenue to watch. "Something'll have happened to him," she said,

drying her eyes. "Na, na, he's no' the man to forget himself. It's been something he couldna avide. The Lord grant it's no deadly—that's a' I say. We've never had an accident in oor family, no since my grandfather that tummeled down the Broken Brig and broke himself a' to bits, and walkit wi' a crutch ever aifter." Bauby had got the length of despair by the time the dog-cart came up the avenue bringing "the gentleman" from the station, whom Marget the housemaid, once more tying on her best apron, and looking in the glass to see if she had not yet got rid of that "awfu' red face," prepared to attend upon. It was at this moment, when Bauby found it required her whole attention to keep her tears from dropping upon the bird, which was cooked to a turn for Beaufort's supper, that a sudden welcome voice made her jump and almost drop the savory morsel. "Eh, Tammas! what I've gaen through this night!" she cried. "I thought you were drowned in the water, or a' your banes broken." "Hold your peace," said Rolls, with a gloomy countenance; "nothing has happened to me." And he took the tray out of Marget's hands without a word. The women stood aghast to see him so scowling, dark, and uncommunicative, proceeding thus into the presence of his master, without any attention to his dress. "Without your claes!" Bauby said. "Hold your peace," repeated her brother. And he paused as he went out of the kitchen and turned round solemnly, "We have all a hantle mair to think of this night than my claes." The solemnity of this address, it is needless to say, made an enormous impression upon the maids, who were wont to consider Rolls, next to the minister, as one of the greatest lights of the parish. Andrew the gardener came in soon after on some domestic errand, and from him they heard something of what had happened at Tinto. "I'm no' sure what but the maister here is in it," Andrew said. "You gomeri! how can Mr. John be in it, and him biding quiet at hame, and no' looking the gait Pat Torrance was on?" "Aweel, I'm saying, I ken naething about it, but that something's happened to Tinto and his muckle mear—and the maister's into it," Andrew replied.

Meanwhile Rolls had carried in the supper. The library where John always sat was cheerful with light and fire. The farther north the traveller goes, the more sure he is, with or without occasion, to find a fire. It scarcely enters into the

Italian's idea of comfort at all, though he shivers with cold—but it is indispensable to a Scotsman's, though it may be warm. The night was soft and mild, the windows wide open, but the ruddy glow made everything cheerful, and John Erskine had brightened to meet his visitor: he was sitting cheerfully in the light, asking Beaufort the hundred questions with which a man a little withdrawn from society assails one who has kept within it. Beaufort himself was older and graver: a man with a fine, picturesque head, somewhat long; a forehead exceptionally white, from which the hair had begun to wear off a little round the temples; a slightly feeble, querulous drop of the lip under his moustache. He was very tall, very slim, with long, white hands, which clasped each other in a nervous, habitual motion. Neither the one nor the other took any notice of Rolls. They were in full flood of talk about old associations, for they had not met for years. Rolls made his preparations very deliberately, almost rubbing against his master on repeated occasions as he went and came. Three or four times over John drew his chair out of the way, a little surprised, but paying no particular attention. When this happened, however, for the fifth or sixth time, he looked up impatiently. "What are you after?" he cried. Rolls looked at him with a steady, meaning gaze, his eyes staring, his mouth rigid—he shook his head slightly, very slowly. "What's the matter?" cried John. Beaufort had seated himself at the table, and had begun his meal. The others were in the shade behind him, between the fireplace and door.

"There's much the matter, sir,—much the matter," said Rolls; "more than will be made up for this many a day."

"What do you mean? What is it? You look as if something had happened with which I had to do," John said, half alarmed, half amused. The only answer Rolls gave was to shake his head once more very gravely as he turned away. His look spoke all that he did not say. Tragedy was in it, and horror, and pity, and reproach. John grew excited in spite of himself. "Hey, here, Rolls! *Rolls*, I say! What is the meaning of this?" he cried. Rolls opened the door slowly, solemnly, and disappeared. "Confound the fellow!" cried John, and rose hastily and followed, with a hurried word to Beaufort. "I suppose the mare has fallen lame, or there is a tile off the roof," he said, half laughing. Rolls was standing in the partial gloom outside the door.

The hall door was open, and the whole darkness of the night showing beyond. Over their heads hung the lamp, flickering in the night air, throwing its light upon the impenetrable blackness opposite to it in the open doorway, but leaving the two figures in shadow below. Rolls stood as if he expected his master. He left him no time to ask any question, but said at once, "You was death, sir," in a low and solemn tone.

"You! What was death? I don't understand you," John cried, in wonder and alarm. "Quick, quick! tell me what you mean."

"It's but ower easy to tell; you was death. He's never stirred. Horse and man one heap, and no' a breath or a tremble in it. It's easy—easy to tell."

"Good God! Rolls, what do you mean? Not—not the Scaur,—not——"

"That's what I mean," Rolls replied almost sternly. "A bonnie morning's work. Just Tinto, poor fellow, with all his faults, and, maybe, the drink in him that made it easy. Dead—dead."

There was a sort of guttural sob in the old man's voice. His heart was wrung, not for Tinto, but with a deeper and closer horror. But John neither thought nor understood this. He fell back a step and leaned against the wall in horror and bewilderment. "Good God!" he repeated with pale lips, with that instinctive appeal which we make without knowing it in the face of every mystery. Under any circumstances, the suddenness and terrible-ness of the event would have appalled him; but now, at this moment, with Beaufort under his roof!—he could only gasp for breath—he could not speak. And he was not aware how eagerly Rolls was noticing every look and gesture, and how his agitation struck the old servant to the heart. He asked a few further questions in profound horror and dismay, then went back to his friend with a ghastly countenance, shaken to the bottom of his heart. The very consciousness that behind this sudden and terrible death stood life, added to the effect. He went back to tell Beaufort of it. That was indeed his first intention, but second thoughts presented to him the embarrassing nature of such a communication at the very moment of his friend's arrival. Beaufort did not notice—being occupied with his supper—the pallor and agitation which had produced so great an effect upon old Rolls. But after a while, as John said nothing, he turned half round and said, "I hope nothing serious has happened to the mare—"

"The mare — Oh yes, it was something very serious — not to be made a jest of. A fatal accident has happened — to one of my neighbors. It is appalling in any case to hear of anything so sudden; but what makes it worse is, that I spent some part of to-day in his company. It is not above four or five hours since I parted with him. We had even a little altercation," said John, with a slight shudder. "There's a bitter lesson for you! To quarrel with a man without a thought of any harm, and a little while after to hear that he is dead, with an unkind thought of you in his heart, and you with hard thoughts of him!"

Beaufort answered gravely and sympathetically as became such an announcement. "Was he a man you liked? Was he a friend?"

"No: neither a friend nor a man I liked, but young and strong; such a frame of a man! — worth you and me put together; and to think that in a moment —"

"How did it happen?" Beaufort asked. "I scarcely asked. He must have fallen, he and his horse, down a precipice — the Scaur, — a place he had often been cautioned against, I believe. Good heavens! to think of it! I thought he must have gone over as we spoke."

And John got up and walked about the room in his excitement. This interrupted altogether the lively flow of conversation with which they had begun the evening. There were one or two attempts made to resume it. But Erskine relapsed in a few moments either into exclamations of dismay, or into restless and uncomfortable silence of thought. The fact was, not only that Torrance's sudden death had startled his imagination and awoke some compunctions in his mind, as in that of Lady Lindores, but that it opened to him a whole confusing sea of speculations and possibilities. It was extraordinary that on the very day which should see this happen, Beaufort had arrived. And what would Lady Caroline now say, — she who, with such self-betraying emotion, had entreated John to keep his friend away? What might happen now were they to meet? John shrank from the suggestion as from an impiety, and yet it would come back. It was evident to Beaufort that his friend was out of sorts and profoundly agitated. He withdrew early to his room, pleading that he was tired, to leave John to himself. It did not concern him (Beaufort) to be sure, but it must, he felt, touch

Erskine more than he was willing to show. And it was a relief to John to be alone. His mind, left to itself, pursued the question, not so much of the dead as of the living. He did not call back Rolls to question him on the accident as he had intended to do; for it was Carry he thought of, not poor Torrance, after the first moment. What could Carry do? What would she think when she found, in the first moment of her freedom, Beaufort so near? The idea overwhelmed him. There seemed a certain indelicacy and precipitancy in the thought. He had risen in his restlessness and opened the window, as he had been in the habit of doing, to breathe the freshness of the night air, when Rolls came in, pale, and with a harassed, stealthy look. He came up to his master, and seeing that he was not observed, touched him on the arm. "If you are going out, sir, to take a walk — or that," he said, with quivering lips, "I've brought you a coat and some haps —"

John looked at him with surprise. The old man was grey and ghastly; his lip quivered. He had a dark coat carefully folded over his arm, several comforters, and a plaid. There was a tremor in his whole figure, and his eyes had a wild look of inquiry and fear.

"Take a walk! Why should I take a walk at this time of night?"

"Oh, I'm no' saying: gentlemen has strange fancies. I'm not one to pry. I'll put the haps here, in case you should want them. You'll find a drop brandy in your flask, and a few sandwiches in the pocket," he added in an undertone.

"Sandwiches! You must be taking leave of your senses. Where do you suppose I should want to go?"

"I would rather not know, sir," said Rolls, solemnly turning away. "What good would it do me to know? I'll not listen nor look. I have no-thing ado with it; but oh, if you'll take my advice, go — go out of harm's way."

"I believe you are mad, Rolls."

"I have plenty to make me sae, at the least of it," Rolls said, and putting down the coat ostentatiously on a chair, he hobbled out of the room, closing the door carefully behind him. John could hear his steps going stealthily up-stairs to the window in the gallery above, where they seemed to pause, and the window was carefully opened. A wild bewilderment seized upon his mind. Of what was it that the old servant was afraid?

From The Gentleman's Magazine.
THE STORY OF L. E. L.

ONE of the most interesting and even romantic of literary figures is that of Letitia Landon — whose curious signature of three letters seems always to bring before persons quite unacquainted with her story, poetical associations of a special and interesting kind. There are but few now alive who know it: there are two, however, persons of great age, who are intimately acquainted with her sad story, and who know well the details of the last sad episode of her life. There was something in her history, and a genuine tone of romance in her poems, which fell into the "Book of Beauty" and "Annals" category, attractive to the young and impulsive. Her portrait, too, which was published, invites the same interest.

This pleasing young creature, born at Chelsea in 1802, found herself at Brompton about the year 1814, the neighbor of one who was then an important literary personage, the director of the most influential journal of the day, the *Literary Gazette*. "My cottage," he says, "overlooked the mansion and grounds of Mr. Landon, the father of L. E. L.; a narrow lane only dividing our residences. My first recollection of the future poetess is that of a plump girl, grown enough to be almost mistaken for a woman, bowling a hoop round the walks, with the hoop-stick in one hand and a book in the other, reading as she ran, and, as well as she could, managing both exercise and instruction at the same time. The exercise was prescribed and insisted upon: the book was her own irrepressible choice." This presently led to the usual request, modestly made, in such cases, would Mr. Jerdan just cast his eyes over some lines of poetry. He did so, and encouraged the young girl. He became to her a sort of guide and friend and educator, and in a naïve passage the grave editor seems to more than hint that he was regarded as an "ideal": —

It is the very essence of the being I have so faintly portrayed, not to see things in their actual state, but to imagine, create, exaggerate, and form them into idealities; and then to view them in the light in which vivid fancy alone has made them appear. Thus it befel with my tuition of L. E. L. Her poetic emotions and aspirations were intense, usurping in fact almost every other function of the brain; and the assistance I could give her in the ardent pursuit produced an influence not readily to be conceived under other circumstances or upon a less imaginative nature. The result

was a grateful and devoted attachment; all phases of which demonstrate and illumine the origin of her productions. Critics and biographers may guess, and speculate, and expatiate forever; but without this master-key they will make nothing of their reveries. With it, all is intelligible and obvious, and I have only to call on the admirers of her delicious compositions to remember this one fact, to settle the question of their reality or romance — that they are the effusions of passionate inspiration, lighted from such unlikely sources. It was her spirit which clothed them according to her own unreal dreams.

Gradually her poems began to excite attention. She soon became a useful assistant on the *Gazette*, doing, besides her verses, reviews and essays; carrying that hod, as it were, which secured, at least, a satisfactory daily wage. She became known and sought. She received good prices for her books, though these were conceived in a spirit of romance that might be called "second hand," the scenes she describes being laid in Italy, where she had never been. Her friend furnishes the following prosaic but satisfactory table of receipts — "Romance and Reality" it might be called: —

For the Improvvisatrice she received	£ 300
For the Troubadour	600
For the Golden Violet	200
For the Venetian Bracelet	150
For the Easter Offering	30
For the Drawing-Room Scrap-Book	105
For Romance and Reality	300
For Francesca Carrara	300
For Heath's Book of Beauty	300
And certainly from other Annals, Magazines, and Periodicals, not less in ten or twelve years than	200
In all	£ 2,485

The fair L. E. L. was editress of one of those engravers' books which were then in high fashion, bound in blue or crimson silk, and printed on wove hot-pressed paper, and for which elegant amateurs were glad to furnish verses and sketches; the names of persons of fashion being mingled with those of the professionals. But it took a good many years before she attained to this elevation. Lady Blessington was the successful conductor of another of these publications, and readers of the life of Dr. Madden will gather a good idea of the almost abject lengths to which the literary aspirant would go to secure a place in her venture.

One of the pleasantest views we have of her is a little "junketing" — evidently a great effort — she took to Paris, in 1834, by the somewhat homely conveyance of

one of the General Steam Navigation Company's packets from St. Katherine's Wharf. She wrote to her first friend Jerdan regularly, who always seems flattered by her attentions; but an attractive young woman, who was at the same time amusingly anxious about the "siller," insensibly begins to flatter the editor, whom she likes, and on whom at the same time so much depends. She writes from Boulogne:—

I began a letter to you yesterday, but on taking it up this morning, I find it is, even to you, scarcely legible, so will begin it over again. I have also another reason; I wrote on English paper, which is heavier, and I have to pay the inland postage, and to-day my time *ne vaut pas mes sous*. You cannot think how I missed you. I really thought the morning never would pass. It did pass, however, and then I wished it back again. The wind blew directly in our teeth. It was impossible to read for three reasons—the sun, the wind, and the noise.

And when I endeavored to get into a pleasant train of thought, it made me melancholy to think I was leaving my native country. I was fairly dying with a desire of talking. I am quite cured of my wish to die for some time to come, as I really think that now I quite understand what the sensation is. I was not sick—scarcely at all; but so faint! As to what Boulogne is like from the sea, I cannot tell. I scarcely recollect anything about my landing. Misfortune first recalled my scattered faculties. At the Custom House you are searched.

Again she writes to him:—

We could not get places to go to Paris till Sunday. Miss Turin wanted to have taken the whole *couplé*, which would have been very comfortable; but a gentleman has already one place, and it is scarcely worth while waiting till Tuesday. Moreover, the *conducteur* says that "*c'est un monsieur si poli*." How he has ascertained that fact I do not know. It has a very odd effect hearing a strange language spoken under our windows; and now I have told you everything that I can think of, which does not amount to much. However, I have taken two things for granted, first, that you would expect my first letter, and also that you would be glad to hear how I was. I fear I shall never make a traveller. I am already beginning to count the days for my return. Kind regards to all inquiring friends, and hoping that you are missing me very much.

In another letter:—

The first thing that I did was to write to you from Boulogne, and the first thing that I do is to write to you from Paris; but truly the pleasure of seeing my hand-writing must be sufficient. Never was there a worse traveller. I arrived in Paris more dead than alive, and till this evening have not held up my head.

The beginning of our journey was delightful; the road is like one avenue, and it was so pretty, having the children, every hill we ascended, throwing roses into the carriage, asking for *sous*. I was scarcely sensible when we arrived at Paris, and was just lifted out of the *diligence*. Since then the extent of my travels has been from the bed to the sofa. We have very pleasant apartments, looking on the Boulevards—such a gay scene. It seems so odd to see the people walking about in caps, looking so neat, and I must add so clean. Mercy on the French carriages and horses; they make such a clatter; drive far more with their tongues than the reins. We have delicious dinners, if I could but eat, which at present is an impossibility. I am still a horrid figure with my sea and sunburning.

Be sure wafer, and thin paper. I shall be very glad to see England again.

I wish I could find any channel of writing by the ambassador's bag, for the postage which I have to pay is two francs, and, what is much worse, the post-office is at the other end of the town, and even when I have a messenger, whom I must pay, the chances are that he will not pay it. I long to see the *Gazette*; and now must end abruptly or lose my opportunity. Pray write to me. I wish I were at home without the journey. I shall write the moment I have anything to tell, and must watch my means of going to the post-office.

Love and fear are the greatest principles of human existence. If you owed my letter of yesterday to the first of these, you owe that of to-day to the last. What, in the name of all that is dreadful in the way of postage, could induce you to put the *Gazette* in your letter? welcome as it was, it has cost me dear, nearly six shillings. I was so glad to see your hand-writing that the shock was lost in the pleasure; but truly, when I come to reflect and put it down in my pocket-book, I am "in a state." The *Gazette* alone would have only cost twopence, and the letter deux francs; but altogether it is ruinous. Please when you next write, let it be on the thinnest paper, and put a w.fer. Still, I was delighted to hear from you, and a most amusing letter it was. The *Gazette* is a real treat. It is such an excellent one as to make me quite jealous.

My only approach to an adventure has been as follows: I was advised, as the best remedy against the excessive fatigue under which I was suffering, to take a bath, which I did early one morning. I found it quite delicious, and was reading "*La Dernière Journée*," when I fell asleep, and was in consequence nearly drowned. I suppose the noise of the book falling aroused me, and I shall never forget the really dreadful feeling of suffocation, the ringing in my ears like a great bell with which I awakened.

She then adroitly turns to "business:—

I think some very interesting papers might be written on the modern French authors. We know nothing of them. If I do write

them I must buy some. At Galignani's they only allow two works at a time, and I can scarcely get any that I desire. I am thinking of subscribing to a French library. One feels the want of a gentleman here very much.

I was so glad of your letter.

I have been hitherto too ill to do anything; but I have quite arranged my plan to write in my own room four or five hours every morning, so I hope to get a great deal done. Adieu, *au revoir*.

35 Rue-le-Grand, Lundi,
which being done into English means Monday.

I hope you will not think that I intend writing you to death; but I cannot let this opportunity pass. Miss Montgomery leaves Paris to-morrow, and so write I must. I am quite surprised that I should have so little to tell you; but really I have nothing, as ill-luck would have it. I went to call on Madame Tastu, from whom I received a charming note, and while I was out Monsieur Sainte-Beuve and Monsieur Odillon Barrot called; however, the latter wrote to me, offering his services as *cicerone*, etc., and I expect him this morning. M. Heine called yesterday; a most pleasant person. I am afraid he did not think me a *personne bien spirituelle*, for you know it takes a long time with me to get over the shame of speaking to a stranger. By way of conversation he said, "Mademoiselle donc beaucoup courues boutiques?" "Mais non." "A-t-elle été au Jardin des Plantes?" "Mais non." "Avez-vous été à l'opéra, aux théâtres?" "Mais non." "Peut-être Mademoiselle aime la promenade?" "Mais non." "A-t-elle donc apporté beaucoup de livres, ou peut-être elle écrit?" "Mais non." At last, in seeming despair, he exclaimed, "Mais Mademoiselle, qu'est-ce que c'est donc qu'elle a fait?" "Mais — mais — j'ai regardé par la fenêtre." Was there ever anything *si bête*? but I really could think of nothing else. I am enchanted with Madame Tastu; her manners are so kind, so encouraging. I did not feel much embarrassed after the first. She has fine features, though there was something about her face that put me in mind of Miss Roberts, but with a softened expression. If I had known as much of Paris as I do even now, I would not have come. In the first place, there is nobody here; *à la campagne* is almost the universal answer. Secondly, it is of no use coming with only a lady; I might almost as well have stayed in London. Thirdly, it is too short a time; I shall not have made a little acquaintance before I must leave. Fourthly, one ought to be married; and fifthly, I wish myself at home again.

Once more to business: —

If I had the opportunity, the time, and could procure the books, I am sure a most delightful series of articles might be written on French literature. *We* know nothing of it; and it would require an immense deal of softening and adaptation to suit it to English taste. How well you have done "The Revolutionary

Epick;" though with less vanity, Disraeli has all the elements of a great poet; but there is something wanting in the putting together. Taste is his great deficiency.

I quite dread — though impatient for it — my journey back again. I shall never make a traveller.

My present address ought to be well known to you.* I write on purpose to scold you. Why have you not sent me the *Gazette*? it would have been such a treat. Also, you have not (like everybody else) written to me, and I quite pine for news from England. I would return to-morrow if I had the opportunity. I do not think that you have properly valued my letters, for things ought to be valued according to their difficulty, and really writing is no little trouble, to say nothing of putting my epistles in the post. I have been very unwell ever since my arrival, and for the last three days I have scarcely been off the sofa. The fatigue and the heat are equally overpowering. I feel so unequal to the exertion of hearing and seeing. I cannot tell you half the kindness and civility which I have received. Of all the persons I have met, or rather who have called upon me — for there is no meeting anybody now, all the *soirées* being over — I have been the most struck with M. Heine; his conversation is most original and amusing. Poor Miss Turin is still in the doctor's hands, and of course it is impossible for me to go out by myself, or accept the attendance of any gentleman alone, so that I am surrounded with all sorts of little difficulties and embarrassments. I never again would think of going anywhere with only a lady; one might almost as well stay at home. I had no idea till now how useful you gentlemen are — I might say, how indispensable. We are very comfortably situated; we have delightful bedrooms, a little ante-chamber, and the prettiest saloon, looking on a charming garden. The quiet is such a relief; for in Rue Louis-le-Grand we could not hear each other's voice for the noise; and above my head was a printer, and opposite my window a carpenter's. I do not know what it may be in the City, but at the West End there is nothing that can give an idea of the noise of Paris; the streets are all paved, the omnibusses innumerable, and carts and carriages all of the heaviest kind. If my money holds out I shall buy several works and translate them at home, but I doubt being able to accomplish it; for though I have bought nothing but what was indispensable, such as gloves, shoes, paper, etc., I have little more left than will bring me home. The dust here is something not to be told; before you have walked a hundred yards your feet are of a whitish brown. A great deal of my time has hung heavily on my hands, I have been so languid and so feverish; still, I feel that I have quite a new stock of ideas, and much material for future use. One ridiculous misfortune is continually befalling me;

* From my translation and publication of "*L'Hermite*" of Jouy.

I am always falling down, the *parquet*, i.e., the floor is so slippery, and I am never very steady on my feet. I really thought I had broken my arm yesterday. I am very anxious about getting home. I like our new lodgings so much. They are, according to Sir William Curtis's orthography, three C's, namely, clean, cool, and quiet.

After all her many hints and allusions, she now came to a formal proposal for business:—

This is quite a business letter, so I beg you will read it with all due attention. I have read now a considerable portion of French new works, and find a great many which, translated with *judgment*, would, I think, sell. I underline judgment, for not a little would be required. What I propose, is to make an annual, consisting entirely of French translations—prose and verse. I could get it ready in about a month. To be called—what? We must think of a good title. "The Laurel, or Leaves from French Literature;" "The Exchange, or Selection of French Authors," with a little vignette on the title-page, of the Bourse or "The Stranger," etc., etc.

I do not propose new prints; any one who knew how to set about it might form here a collection of very pretty prints of all sorts of popular subjects. You must please see if any publisher will undertake this, and if they will, please write as soon as possible. I feel convinced I could make a very amusing book; shortening, softening down, omitting, and altering in my translations, according to my own discretion. I could have my part of the volume ready in about six weeks.

These extracts from her letters will be found singularly sprightly and interesting, especially the naïve reference to "business," as her money was going rapidly.

This interesting woman, as may be imagined, was much sought for her own personal gifts—"a great warmth of feeling—a peculiar charm of manner and address—an affectionate, loving nature—a simplicity of mind, wholly free from affectation—a guileless character, child-like in many of its traits, devoid of all suspicion of evil intentions and designs, and yet not free from impulsive tendencies and some degree of wilfulness, being her characteristics."

This confidence—and she went much about by herself—made her likely to be the victim of would-be-sympathizers of an unsuitable kind; and when it is found that the well-known Grantley Berkeley, Dr. Maginn, and others of the kind were interesting themselves in her and championing her cause, it shows she was not over-prudent. She had the tendency of all heroines—trust in everybody she met.

With this she had a painful, acute sensitiveness, which made her feel and exaggerate slights and injuries to an extravagant degree; and this had the unfortunate result of raising up hosts of enemies, who harassed the unprotected creature for years with anonymous attacks and rumors. "Her peace of mind," says her friend Dr. Madden, "was more than disturbed by those diabolical efforts to annoy her—it was destroyed by them; and when laboring under recent inflictions of outrages of this sort, all her energies, bodily and mental, were disordered and impaired by them: the first paroxysms of suffering were usually followed by syncope, spasms, tremors, and convulsive attacks, approaching to epileptic seizures. And when the violence of this nervous agitation would cease, then would come intervals of the most profound dejection of spirits."

It may be conceived that there were many suitors for so interesting a prize; but these enemies, by a dreadful system of persecution, seemed always to interpose, and succeeded in breaking off the engagements. One of the most eminent sculptors of her day was eager to make her his wife, but their cruel interference broke off the match.

With this gaiety of nature before us—which seems almost childlike—we turn to a letter written by Lady Blessington, after her death, which outlines L. E. L.'s tragic history, and serves as a curious commentary on her life thus far:—

Poor dear L. E. L. lost her father, who was a captain in the army, while she was yet a child. He had married the widow of an army agent, a woman not of refined habits, and totally unsuited to him. On his death, his brother, the late Dean of Exeter, interested himself for his nephew and niece, the sole children left by Captain Landon; and deeming it necessary to remove them from their mother, placed the girl (poor L. E. L.) at school; and the boy at another. At an unusually early age she manifested the genius for which she afterwards became so deservedly popular. On leaving school her uncle placed her under the protection of her grandmother, whose exigence rendered the life of her gifted grandchild anything but a happy one. Her first poetical effusions were published many years ago, and the whole of the sum they produced was appropriated to her grandmother.

Soon after, L. E. L. became acquainted with Mr. Jerdan, who, charmed with her talents, encouraged their exertion by inserting her poems in a Literary Journal, with all the encomiums they merited. This notice drew the attention of publishers on her, and alas! drew also the calumny and hatred of the envi-

ous, which ceased not to persecute her through her troubled life; but absolutely drove her from her native land. There was no slander too vile, and no assertion too wicked, to heap on the fame of this injured creature. Mr. Jerdan was married, and the father of a large family, many of whom were older than L. E. L. Those who disbelieved the calumny refrained not from repeating it, until it became a general topic of conversation. Her own sex, fearful of censure, had not courage to defend her, and this highly gifted and sensitive creature, without having committed a single error, found herself a victim to slander. More than one advantageous proposal of marriage was made to her; but no sooner was this known, than anonymous letters were sent to the persons who wished to wed her, filled with charges against her honour. Some of her suitors, wholly discrediting these calumnies, but thinking it due to her to refute them, instigated inquiries to trace them to the original source whence they came; but a single proof could be had of even the semblance of guilt, though a thousand were furnished of perfect innocence. Wounded and humiliated, poor L. E. L. refused to wed those who could, however worthy the motive, seem to doubt her honour, or instigate inquiry into her conduct; and from year to year dragged on a life of mortification and sorrow. Pride led her to conceal what she suffered, but those who best knew her were aware that for many months sleep could only be obtained by the aid of narcotics, and that violent spasms and frequent attacks of the nerves left her seldom free from acute suffering. The effort to force a gaiety she was far from feeling, increased her sufferings even to the last. The first use she made of the money produced by her writings was to buy an annuity for her grandmother; that grandmother whose acerbity of temper and wearying *exigence* had embittered her home. She then went to reside in Hans Place, with some elderly ladies, who kept a school, and here again calumny assailed her. Dr. Maginn, a married man, and father of grown daughters, was now named; though his habits, age, appearance, and attachment to his wife, ought to have precluded the possibility of attaching credence to so absurd a piece of scandal, poor L. E. L. was again attacked in a manner that nearly sent her to the grave. This last falsehood was invented a little more than four years ago, when some of those who disbelieved the other scandal affected to give credit to this, and stung the sensitive mind of poor L. E. L. almost to madness by their hypocritical conduct.

Driven to despair almost by this persecution, and panting for repose, an opportunity now presented itself of release. A gentleman called Maclean, who had an appointment at Cape Coast, was attracted by her, and after some months proposed for her. Lady Blessington relates the next portion of the episode:—

Wrung to the quick by the slanders heaped on her, she accepted his offer; but he deemed it necessary to return to Cape Coast Castle for a year, before the nuptials could be solemnized. He returned at the expiration of that term, renewed his offer, and she, poor dear soul! informed all her friends—and me amongst the number—of her acceptance of it, and of her intention of soon leaving England with him; soon after this Mr. Maclean went to Scotland, and remained there many months without writing a single line to his betrothed. Her feelings under this treatment you can well imagine. Beset by inquiries from all her friends as to where Mr. Maclean was? when she was to be married? etc., etc.; all indicating a strong suspicion that he had heard the reports, and would appear no more. A serious illness assailed her, and reduced her to the brink of the grave. When her friend wrote and demanded an explanation from Mr. Maclean, he answered, that fearing the climate of Africa might prove fatal to her, he had abandoned the intention of marrying, and felt embarrassed at writing to say so.

She, poor soul! mistook his hesitation and silence for generosity, and wrote to him a letter fraught with affection; the ill-starred union was again proposed, but on condition that it should be kept a secret, even from the friends she was residing with. From the moment of his return from Scotland to that of their departure, he was moody, mysterious, and ill-humoured—continually sneering at literary ladies—speaking slightly of her works—and, in short, showing every symptom of a desire to disgust her. Sir—remonstrated with him on his extraordinary mode of proceeding; so did all her friends; but the die was cast. Her pride shrank from the notion of again having it said that another marriage was broken off; and she determined not to break with him. Mystery on mystery followed; no friend or relative of his—though an uncle and aunt were in London—sanctioned the marriage; nay, more, it is now known that two days previous to it, he, on being questioned by his uncle, denied positively the fact of his intention to be married.

The marriage *was a secret one*, and not avowed until a very few days previous to their sailing for Africa; he refused to permit her own maid, who had long served her, to accompany her, and it was only at the eleventh hour that he could be induced to permit a strange servant to be her attendant. His conduct on board ship was cold and moody. This indifference continued at Cape Castle, and what was worse, discontent, ill-humour, and reproaches at her ignorance of house-keeping met her every day, until her nerves became so agitated that the sound of his voice made her tremble. She was required to do the work of a menial; her female servant was discharged, and was to sail the day that the hapless L. E. L. died.

To one so bright, and fond of society

and sympathy, this expatriation must have been terrible. On arriving at the gloomy Cape Coast Castle, of which her husband was a sort of governor, it was found that she was the only lady in the colony. Mr. or Captain Maclean assumed a severe mode of conduct, not to say discipline, and, as the poor indiscreet lady wrote home by way of complaint to her friends, he had said "that he will never cease correcting me till he has broken my spirit, and complains of my temper, which you know was never, even under heavy trials, bad." Too much importance should not be attached to such speeches. Her husband was in wretched health, dyspeptic, with an affection of the liver, and thus not likely to be what is called compatible. The place itself, at that time, was a gloomy, wretched one, containing only a few European traders, with a number of half-castes. The castle was a dismal building, and the acting governor had no more than £500 a year. He delighted in mathematics and was fond of expressing his contempt for literary matters. With such elements, things did not promise well. Still, it was but a short probation. The marriage took place on June 7, 1838, and by October 15 of the same year, within four months, the gifted L. E. L. had died by poison accidentally taken. One Mr. Cruickshank, a local merchant, has given a very pleasing picture of the last days of this ill-fated lady.

He wrote, he said, "as one who enjoyed and keenly felt the fascinations of her society, who only ten hours before her death had sat and listened with a rapt attention to her brilliant sallies of wit and feeling:"—

I sent in my name by the servant, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Maclean came to the hall and welcomed me. I was hurried away to his bedroom, Mrs. Maclean saying, as she tripped through the long gallery, "You are a privileged person, Mr. Cruickshank, for I can assure you it is not every one that is admitted here." I took a seat by the side of his bed, upon which Mrs. Maclean sat down, arranging the clothes about her husband in the most affectionate manner, and receiving ample compensation for her attentions by a very sweet and expressive smile of thankfulness.

As the day drew near for my departure, she occupied herself more and more in writing to her friends in England. I agreed to dine and spend the evening of the 15th with the Governor and his lady, the day before the vessel sailed. At eleven o'clock I rose to leave. It was a fine and clear night, and she strolled into the gallery, where we walked for half an

hour. Mr. Maclean joined us for a few minutes, but not liking the night air, in his weak state, he returned to the parlour. She was much struck with the beauty of the heavens in those latitudes at night, and said it was when looking at the moon and the stars that her thoughts oftenest reverted to home. She pleased herself with thinking that the eyes of some beloved friend might be turned in the same direction, and that she had thus established a medium of communication for all that her heart wished to express. "But you must not," she said, "think me a foolish moon-struck lady. I sometimes think of these things oftener than I should, and your departure for England has called up a world of delightful associations. You will tell Mr. F—, however, that I am not tired yet. He told me I should return by the vessel that brought me out; but I knew he would be mistaken." We joined the Governor in the parlour. I bade them good-night, promising to call in the morning, to bid them adieu. I never saw her in life again.

Next day a hurried message came to him to go to the castle. She was dead. He was brought into a room where the doctor was trying to see if life had not fled. "I seized her hand and gazed upon her face. The expression was calm and meaningless. Her eyes were open, fixed." Poor L. E. L.!

Her maid was, it seems, leaving for England by a packet that was sailing that day. This had affected and agitated her much, as the desolate creature felt she would be left still more alone and helpless. The maid had come to her door in the morning, but could not open it. On doing so she found her mistress dead on the floor, with a phial in her hand, containing an extract of prussic acid, which she foolishly used, as nervous persons use chloral now. There could be no doubt from the evidence that she had accidentally poisoned herself by an overdose, from the wish to allay her agitation. But so vehemently did her friends in England take up the case, that it was said she had destroyed herself in despair at her treatment. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Maclean was an uncongenial man, but he was in no way concerned in this matter.

The night before her death, she wrote some letters. In one she says: "The castle is a very noble building, and all the rooms large and cool, while some would be pretty even in England." The room in which she is writing "is painted a deep blue, with some splendid engravings." "Mr. Maclean's library is fitted up with book-cases of African ma-

hogany, and portraits of distinguished authors."

And she adds, "But I, however, never approach it without due preparation and humility, so crowded is it with scientific instruments, telescopes, etc., etc., none of which may be touched by hands profane."

In the letter just referred to, addressed to her "dearest Marie," she begins with eulogiums on the castle, "infinitely superior to all she ever dreamed of." The rooms are excellent. The building is fine; she does not suffer from heat. "Insects there are few or none, and," she adds, "I am in excellent health." But then follows the admission of the dreariness of her life: "*The solitude, except an occasional dinner, is absolute. From seven in the morning till seven in the evening, when we dine, I never see Mr. Maclean, and rarely any one else.*" But then she informs her friend, she was welcomed to Cape Coast by a series of dinners, which she is glad are over, "for it is very awkward to be the only lady; still, the great kindness," she observes, "with which I have been treated, and the very pleasant manners of many of the gentlemen, have made me feel it as little as possible."

Mr. Maclean [wrote Lady Blessington] admits that indisposition and mental annoyance must have rendered him far from being a kind or agreeable companion to poor Letitia; but adds, that had she lived a little longer, she would have found him very different, as he was — when not ill and tormented by various circumstances, which he does not explain — easy and good-tempered to a fault. He says, that never was there so kind or so faultless a being on earth as that poor, poor girl, as he calls her, and that he never knew her value until he had lost her. In fact, his letter seemed an answer to charges preferred against him by the departed, and, what is strange, the packet that brought the fatal news, brought no letter of recent date for her —, though she never missed an opportunity, and they occur rarely, of writing to him. Her letters, all of which have breathed the fondest affection for him, admit that she had little hope of happiness from her stern, cold, and morose husband.

By a most extraordinary coincidence, Dr. Madden, well known for his curious travels with Lady Hester Stanhope, who was also second in the preliminaries of a duel between the late Charles Mathews and Count D'Orsay, a man of great knowledge, industry, and literary gifts, as his friends know, was despatched on a government inquiry to Cape Coast. He

had been much interested, like all her friends, in poor L. E. L., and determined to prosecute his inquiries on the spot, for the rancor of partisanship had gone so far as to insinuate that her husband was responsible for her death in more direct fashion than mere harshness. This visit was in 1841. Dr. Madden noted the gloomy desolation of the castle — the large courtyard where L. E. L. was, oddly enough, buried, over whose grave the soldiers were drilled, and in the wall of which a memorial tablet was inserted shortly after his arrival. He frankly told him that he would like to inquire into the matter fully, and was met in the same spirit. Dr. Madden was enabled to vindicate him completely. However, the commissioner was not very *bien vu* by the natives, and being presently seized with the fever of the place, conceived they had attempted to poison him: on which he had himself hurriedly removed from the castle.

Such was the strange story of the heroine L. E. L. She was sung in verses by Landor and others: she was held to be a victim: her memory is still cherished by those who recall her. Captain Maclean died ten years later, in 1848, and was interred in the courtyard beside his wife. He was a poor man; but had he lived three months longer he would have inherited a large fortune from Sir John Maclean, who bequeathed it to him.

PERCY FITZGERALD.

From Temple Bar.

IN AN INN GARDEN.

"That time, — O times!"

"I REMEMBER the girl as if I had seen her yesterday," said Madame Sophie R—. "I do not know her history; I have never seen her again. But what I do know, I will relate to you, since you wish to hear it: —"

Not far from the city of L— lies a little inn garden by a river. It is now some years since circumstances obliged me to spend a twelvemonth in L—. I am not used to the life of a great city. I found little in it to please me; and it was with delight that I one day accidentally discovered this garden, to which I could go easily, in which I henceforward found myself again and again with pleasure. A quarter of an hour by train brought me to a small station, at which I alighted. A

brief space of dusty highroad then lay before me, still bearing traces of the adjacent city in mean houses, in ragged wayside weeds whitened by the dust or splashed by the mud raised by a hundred carts and wagons that daily lumbered along to the city gates, in frequent wine-shops and a half-listless folk, in all the shabby life, lacking the characteristics of town and country alike, which clings about the outskirts of a great town. But a sudden turn brought me at once to the scene that had the charm of absolute peace among rural surroundings. A deep, winding lane ended in a quiet little inn set between poplars and green hedges. Cocks and hens were forever pecking about the grass-grown threshold of the open door, or straying into the passage that led through the house; ducks quacked and straggled to and from a shallow pond; pigeons cooed; the deep, resonant bark of a chained house-dog announced every new-comer. An atmosphere of homely country life, in short, lay about the whole place; it seemed to me a paradise of peace and sunshine and quiet that I had found, when I first discovered the little inn in its sheltered nook. A trellis vine was trained above the door in front, and behind the house lay the garden of which I have spoken. It was a long strip of ground shut in on either side by high, bushy hedges and rustling poplars. There was no turf and hardly any flowers to brighten the uniform green; only a few straggling roses, a few bushes of rosemary set in some plots of thrifty vegetables near the house. Lower down, green, vine-covered berceaux afforded a cool shelter from the sun; and at the extreme end of the garden, divided from it only by a low, ivy-grown, wooden palisade, ran a river which gave the whole place its character and its charm. It was not a wide or rapid river: on the contrary, it was a gentle stream, so narrow that every wild flower growing among the deep grass in the opposite meadow could be seen from the garden; so quiet, that its unruffled surface had almost the glassy stillness of a pool, and its clear depths reflected each tree and bush, each blade in the fringe of grass that overhung it from the high banks, each leaf of the water-plants its tranquil current hardly stirred. Above and below the little inn the river made a bend; willows and elms closed in the prospect, and added the charm of the mysterious beyond to the deep seclusion of the scene. Immediately opposite the garden lay a breadth of verdant meadow

land shut in by rising ground behind, by trees on either side; red and white cows sometimes wandered there, or came down to where a break in the overhanging bank had allowed a muddy path to be trodden to the river's edge. For sunlight and shadow, for peace and the suggestions of peace, for coolness and verdure, and silence unruffled except by the inarticulate murmur of ripple and birds, I know of no spot to equal my little river garden.

I describe it minutely, for it is inseparably connected in my mind with the girl whom I saw there for the first and last time. As I think of her, it shapes itself in all its details as the background to her image.

I had visited it often through the long, hot summer; I had made friends with the cheerful hostess; I had dined there and sat through some long afternoons, reading and writing at one of the little green tables set about in shady corners. I even thought at one time of leaving the city altogether during these sultry months, and of establishing myself at my little inn; a fresh, white curtain swaying to and fro in an upper casement seemed to promise an equally fresh interior; a cool retreat with a verdant prospect of trees and green-shadowed water. But on reflection I gave up this idea. I feared to miss part of the charm of my garden in becoming familiar with it, in losing the sense of contrast between the hot roads and its leafy freshness by bringing the dusty cares of every-day life to desecrate this tranquil nook, devoted hitherto to leisure and enjoyment. One grows an epicure in these matters, I find, as one grows old; a naïve pleasure, a fresh impression becomes a treasure to be hoarded, not recklessly used or flung aside after the careless fashion of youth. Therefore I resolved to stay in the city; and I was confirmed in this resolution by a certain Sunday afternoon excursion that I made to the little inn. Alighting from a crowded train and issuing from the station, I found the road lively with carts and public vehicles filled with young men and city maidens; and long before I reached my garden, the sound of loud voices, of song and laughter, warned me of what I should find. I looked and fled. I did not grudge them the garden, Heaven knows. It was I who was out of place. But since it was quiet I had come to seek, I fled.

It was more than a week before I went again. I arrived early and found, as was not unfrequently the case, that I had the garden to myself. It was drawing towards

the end of the summer, and the mellow sunlight, the sense of ripeness in the air, gave, as I remember, an added sense of repose to the quiet spot. I had seated myself in my favorite corner; the hostess happened to be absent, but the little maid had served me my usual noonday meal of coffee and eggs; I had arranged my books and writing materials on the little table before me and on the bench at my side, and was looking forward to a long and peaceful afternoon, when two new-comers entered the garden, and arrested my attention.

At the first glance, indeed, I took them to be merely such a bourgeois couple as sometimes strayed into the garden to breakfast; but a closer observation made me at once change my opinion. The man, who was tall, fair, and handsome, was no bourgeois. His hands, in one of which he carried a pair of dogskin gloves, were white, with carefully-kept nails, and a plain seal ring on one finger; his coat was well cut; he had an air of ease and good society. The girl, who was quite young, wore a neat pink cotton gown, rather faded in the wash, with a white muslin bow carefully tied under her linen collar; on her head, when she entered the garden, was a little white net bonnet with pink ribbon strings, a trifle faded like her gown; but this she at once removed and hung up on the branch of a tree, showing some thick twists of dark hair. She was slight, and she was also pretty, but more through coloring and expression perhaps, than through feature; her cheeks had a charming natural bloom, set off by her pink gown; her eyes, which were small rather than large, shone with a brilliant, fitful light under their dark lashes; she had a determined, almost stubborn-looking mouth and chin, and not at all a classic nose. Her hands, which were gloveless, were pale and smooth as those of city girls used to a sedentary life are wont to be, but neither well-shaped, nor well-kept; on one finger she wore a little cheap coral ring.

They had given their orders apparently on their way through the house, and sat down at one of the little green tables to await the arrival of their meal. My presence did not seem to disturb them in the least; though as they had placed themselves just opposite me, I was near enough to hear every word they said. Their conversation, in fact, was unintelligible to me, as it turned almost exclusively on persons and incidents well known to both, with rapid passing allusions to one thing

and another. It was the girl who talked most; leaning forward a little, her arms folded on the table, she spoke with great vivacity; whilst her companion lounging back in his chair, with his hands in his pockets, responded by an occasional word and nod. Now and then she sprang up and mimicked a gesture, a step, a movement; then, reseating herself, talked on as before. The restless gaiety of her manner, in which there was no affectation and which yet seemed to me not altogether natural, contrasted with the immobility of her companion. She laughed a good deal, whilst he hardly took the trouble to smile. All the effort, all the exertion of the conversation, were on her side.

She paused at last in her eager talk, and sat silent for a moment, leaning back in her chair, her hands clasped behind her head, her bright eyes gazing before her; then jumping up, she began to flit about the garden with the half-sprigging step and inconsequent movements of a child. Espying a solitary flower on a climbing rose, one of the few roses which the garden produced, she sprang to get it and failed; it hung too high overhead. She desisted after one or two attempts, and the man, who had been watching her, slowly rose and went to the spot. He was tall, as I have said, more than a head taller than she was, and reached it without difficulty.

"Here is your rose," he said, holding it towards her.

She did not at once take the flower. She had torn her finger with a thorn and was holding it in her mouth. "Give me your handkerchief," she said in a moment.

He drew a handkerchief from his pocket and gave it to her. It was a cambric one, with an initial embroidered in one corner. The girl took it; then using her teeth as scissors, she cut the edge of the hem, tore off a long strip that included the initial, and wound it round her finger.

"There!" she cried in a joyous voice. "Whoever embroidered that for you, will never have her work used by you again."

"I have not an idea who worked it," he answered. "You, perhaps. One buys them by the dozen."

"I don't do embroidery," she said rather curtly. She took the rose from his hand. "This is mine?" she said. "Well, then, I give it to you. It was for you I wanted it."

She put it in his buttonhole, and felt for a pin with which to fasten it securely, but could not find one. "No matter,"

she said, "it will hold. Now promise me one thing—that you will keep it always."

He looked down at the flower. "Always? This rose?" he said. "Do you know what a dead rose looks like? Like that"—picking one from the rose-tree. "What on earth should I keep a thing like that for?"

She laughed. "Well, give me that," she said, snatching the dead rose from his hand and thrusting it inside her frock. "Now, we've each got one; and if I keep mine, you might keep yours."

"I don't in the least want you to keep it," he answered; "but do if you like. You're always rather sentimental, you know."

"I'm not; you know I'm not," she cried. "But I suppose one may have feelings."

"No, don't," he said, walking away towards the table again. This scene had passed so close to me, that I had inevitably heard every word that was spoken; and now, as her companion turned his back on her, I saw a look of pain that momentarily whitened her cheeks and lips come into the girl's face. She stood motionless, her brows drawn together, her fingers tightly interlaced, apparently struggling to master some almost overpowering passion or emotion. She succeeded. In another moment the blood came rushing back, her fingers unlocked; with a snatch of song, and the same gay springing step as before, she ran up the garden to meet the white-capped maid who was advancing with a tray.

"Here is our breakfast," she cried. "And I am hungry. What have you ordered? Will there be chocolate and galette and an omelette?"

They sat down together just within the shadow of one of the vine-covered berceaux, precisely opposite to where I still kept my seat and my book. Between us lay only the garden path flooded by the hot midday sun. The girl interested me, and as it was they who had chosen their position opposite me, I found no indiscretion in keeping the seat I had previously held. Their repast lasted a long time. I observed, however, that whilst her companion made an excellent meal, the girl, who had declared herself hungry, touched hardly anything. All the delicacies she had desired, appeared, and she allowed herself to be helped from each dish in turn; but she employed herself in feeding a cat and dog belonging to the inn, who had come and seated themselves, one on either side of her. Her gay mood had

changed a little; she talked less and looked more at her companion, who did not look much at her, but rather at the plates and dishes before him.

"We are extremely dull," he said at last, taking out his watch, "and we may have to spend an hour yet in this hot little hole of a garden. I shall go and order some champagne."

He rose as he spoke and walked away towards the inn. The rose, loosely fastened in his buttonhole, fell out as he moved. He did not notice it, but the girl did. She picked it up, pressed it with a passionate gesture to her lips, then thrust it hurriedly inside the bosom of her frock, pressing both hands tightly over it with an energy that brought the varying color to her cheek with a rush. When her companion returned, she was idly tracing a design with her forefinger in some spilt red wine on the green table. He glanced down at his coat.

"Where is my rose?" he said.

"Have you lost it?" she answered, without looking up.

"I suppose so—I had it a moment ago."

He looked down and about him on the dusty ground. She also stirred slightly, and with the point of her shoe moved aside the leaves that clustered at the foot of the vine trellis. He resigned himself.

"You will have to get me another," he said.

"Never," she answered, leaning back in her chair with folded arms, and looking at him with a smile at once defiant and provoking. "I will never give you a rose again."

He shrugged his shoulders slightly. "As you will," he said; "I shall not die for want of a rose."

She looked at him for a moment in silence. "Die!" she said then. "I believe you will never die, unless it be of old age."

"Thank you for the prophecy," he said, laughing, "and may you prove a true prophet. Here; let us drink to your old age and mine."

The champagne had been brought; he filled a glass and passed it to her. She just touched it with her lips, then springing to her feet, held it aloft whilst in a clear, untaught voice she sang a drinking-song, which an opera recently the fashion had made popular. Her companion, who was smoking, joined in the chorus with a lazy hum, watching the while, with half-closed eyes, the rings of smoke that he puffed into the air. She sang the song

through; at the end, whether by accident or intention, I do not know, the glass fell crashing to the ground.

"Bravo! bravo!" said her companion. "Excellent! well sung! But you have lost your wine."

He pushed his own glass towards her as he spoke. She took no notice of it, but dropping into her chair, sat with her elbows on the table, her chin propped on her hands, gazing before her into vacancy.

"Do you know what I should like better than anything in the world?" she said, suddenly turning to her companion.

"What?" he answered.

"To go once, only just once, to a box at the opera."

"Well, I will take you," he said.

"You will?" she cried eagerly. "Oh, when?"

"To-morrow night."

She sprang to her feet again, clapping her hands. "To-morrow night—do you mean really to-morrow night?"

"Certainly I mean it," he said. "I will take a box to-morrow, and call for you in the evening."

She stood looking at him, her hands clasped as though in ecstasy. All at once a shade stole over her face.

"This dress," she said, looking down at it and lifting a frill, "it will not do—and it is the only one I have."

"Oh, it will do well enough," he answered carelessly; "put a flower in your hair. You always look charming, you know."

"But I want to go to a large box," she said, her eyes widening a little as with anxiety, "in the centre of the house, where I can see every one and be seen."

"Yes, yes, I understand; but you will do very well. You can put a rose in your hair."

"The dead rose," she said with a laugh.

"What do you mean?" he said, frowning a little.

"Oh, nothing," she answered; "see, here is some one come to speak to you."

She turned quickly round as she spoke the last words, and stood with her back to him, her hand pressed tightly on her heart. The little inn-maid had approached once more to tell the gentleman that his horse and servant had arrived and were waiting.

"I must go," he said with a certain alacrity. He paid the bill that the maid had brought, and rose.

"You don't mind staying here alone

till the train goes?" he said, as he buttoned up his coat and drew on his gloves.

"Not in the least, oh, not in the least," she answered; "it is only half an hour, you know."

"Then I will be off at once. I have no time to lose."

He took up his hat, but still lingered a moment as though he hesitated to say some final word. It was she who spoke it.

"Till to-morrow evening, then," she cried in her clear, childish voice. "You'll call for me?"

"Yes, yes; that is it," he said with an air of relief, and putting on his hat. "I will call for you."

They walked up the path together—she with her springing steps at his side. About half-way up the garden she paused, and without any formal farewell apparently, allowed him to go on alone, whilst she stood, one hand shading her eyes, the other pressed on her heart, in a way that seemed habitual with her. He walked on up to the inn, but before entering it, turned and looked back. Instantly the girl started from her attitude, waving and kissing both hands in a sort of joyous adieu, till he had turned again and passed out of sight. One minute longer she stood, whilst a sound of horses' hoofs could be heard retreating up the lane, fainter and fainter in the distance. Then she turned. Gropingly, as though blinded by the sunlight, she made her way to the table again, and fell back in a chair as though she had been shot.

I thought she had swooned, so colorless was her face, so motionless her closed eyelids and loose, hanging hands. I went up to her, and raised her head, which had fallen back against the wooden framework of the berceau. She had not fainted, for she roused herself at the touch and sat up, leaning forward, her head drooping a little, her arms straight and rigid, her hands tightly clasped, like one in a paroxysm of anguish.

"Oh, I can't bear it—I can't bear it," she said, as if the words were wrung from her.

"You are suffering. Can I not help you?" I said, trying to take one of her cold hands in mine. But she resisted the attempt, though I believe she was hardly conscious of my presence.

"Oh, I can't bear it," she repeated with a moan. She sat motionless for a moment, gazing before her with blank eyes. Suddenly she started to her feet, and stood with her face turned towards

the inn. Her lips moved, but no words were audible. She made a step or two forward in the direction of the house, but her strength failed. She caught at the table to support herself, and sank back again in the chair in the same deathlike immobility, with the same deathlike pallor as before. Unable to guess the cause of her misery, I could yet divine by the reaction now, by this utter prostration, what the last hour had cost her. The wine still stood on the table. I poured out a glass and held it to her lips. She tasted it, then sat up and drank it eagerly. It revived her, if only to a keener anguish; it gave her the power and the will to speak.

"I never wished him good-bye," she said in heartbroken accents. "I might have said one word; and now it is too late. I shall never see him again."

She wrung her hands as in bitter regret or self-reproach. No one could see a fellow-creature held by such mortal anguish as hers, without striving to find the cue to it.

"Who is it you will never see again?" I said. "Not your friend who has just now left you? Is he not to take you to the opera to-morrow night?"

"Oh, the opera"—she said, clasping and unclasping her fingers. "He was so anxious to deceive me, he forgot. There is no opera now."

It was true, though I also had forgotten it. There was no opera at that season. In a moment she began to speak again, rapidly and excitedly.

"He thought to deceive me, but I deceived him," she said. "He could never have guessed that I knew. He would have hated me if I had made a scene. He used to like me, he said, because I was always bright; and he will remember me bright. I was just the same to him to the very last, though I knew I should never see him again."

She paused. Even then, though her words were apparently addressed to me, I doubt if she were fully conscious of my presence. She never once looked at me, or turned her eyes in my direction.

"How did you know?" I asked her at last.

"I was told," she said, more absently; "and I inquired, and found it was true. When he asked me to come here to-day, I knew it was for the last time, and knowing what I did, his manner told it me too. We have often been here," she went on, a little wildly, looking round her. "This frock—it was new the first time we came

—and he said he liked it better than any dress he had ever seen." She started to her feet again, both hands pressed with the familiar gesture on her heart. "Oh, I can't bear it—I can't bear it!" she cried.

We were interrupted. "Lisa, I have come!" cried a voice from the upper end of the garden.

A young woman, poorly clad in a dingy brown gown and shawl, came running towards us with outstretched hands.

"Is he gone?" she cried breathlessly.

I do not know what it was that moved the girl. Whether the outspoken question acted like an as yet unrealized presentiment of her woe; whether the familiar apparition of her friend recalled too vividly the dusty gloom of the workaday life from which she had emerged, to which she was about to return. For one moment she stood looking at her with startled eyes; the next, with one swift rush she had reached the end of the garden, she had cleared the low palisade, and sprung into the river. So swift was her movement, that we heard the splash and noted the meeting waves, whilst still too struck with horror to move from the spot.

She was instantly rescued. Just below the garden a little wooden platform, supported by piles driven into the bank, projected into the stream, and made a mooring-place for a boat. The boatman, a strong-built, elderly man, was there, preparing to loosen his little bark. He heard the plunge. As the girl rose, he caught at her dress with his hook, and with his sturdy arms lifted her out of the water. Almost by the time we had reached the bottom of the garden, she was standing beside us again in the sunny path, dazed, dripping, half-stunned, but otherwise not the worse. She stood still in the centre of the path, and looked down at her mud-stained frock.

"It is a good thing it will wash," she said in a minute with a laugh.

Her friend put her arm in hers and tried to draw her towards the inn; but she resisted, and freed herself from the grasp. She looked round her, shivering in the bright sunshine, and pushing back her long hair, streaming with wet, from her face. The man, with a shrug of his shoulders, had gone back to his boat. No alarm had reached the house; we three were alone. All at once the girl dropped on to a bench close by, and broke into an agony of weeping. Five minutes before, I doubt if she could have shed a tear; now the cold, the clinging wet of her gar-

ments, the physical wretchedness and discomfort, had touched a lower chord of misery, and she wept convulsively with despairing, heartbroken sobs. Her friend, meanwhile, stood beside her. She was a pallid, rather sullen-looking young woman, with a worn face. She did not speak, but put her arm round the younger girl, who turned presently and hid her face against her friend. In another minute she rose, and suffered herself to be led away to the house.

I followed them, but only to desire the maid to see to their comfort and give them anything they might need. Then I returned to my afternoon's work. I cannot say I did much. Shaken and startled by the scene I had just witnessed, my thoughts were with the girl who had roused in me an interest so sudden and so deep. I did not go to her. Involuntarily I had been an intruder in a tragic hour of her life; the recognition that the intrusion had not been unwelcome lay with her; and with her friend at hand, I knew she would not feel herself helpless or deserted. Still I was unwilling to go away without seeing her once more. The hours passed: the girl's bonnet still hung on the tree where she had tied it in the morning, and by this sign I knew that she and her companion had not yet left the inn. Towards evening, when I was preparing to take my departure, the bonnet was fetched; and returning to the house, I met the two in the passage, and found that they proposed returning to the city by the same train as myself. The girl looked pale and languid, and disinclined to speak. The pink cotton was clean and dry again, her dark hair was neatly coiled; but all the pretty color was gone from her cheeks, all the light had died out of her eyes; her frock hung about her in limp folds, and the crisp white muslin bow, which had given the last touch to her dress, had disappeared. All the freshness had gone from her toilette of the morning as from herself.

Her friend, I fancied, kept a sort of jealous guard over her, and we travelled back to the city in different carriages. On arriving, however, I sought her out before leaving the station. The interest she had awakened in me was too keen for me to let her go without some parting word.

"Will you come and see me," I said, laying my hand on her shoulder, "or may I come and see you? I should like to know something of you, to hear how you are."

She looked at me in silence.

"No," she said at last, shaking her head, "your life lies there — mine here" — pointing with her two hands; "we have nothing more to do with each other."

The words were defiant; but her voice and the look in her eyes were not. The next moment she had disappeared with her friend in the crowd. I have never seen her again.

It was long before I revisited my river garden. A desecrating breath had passed over its green berceaux, a life-tragedy had troubled the peace of its limpid waters. It was already autumn when I saw it again; the paths were damp, the yellow vine-leaves were beginning to thin. The silent melancholy discouraged me — I went there no more.

E. F. POYNTER.

From The Leisure Hour.

GAINSBOROUGH'S LETTERS TO WILLIAM JACKSON.

"FOR a letter to an intimate friend, Gainsborough had few equals and no superior. It was like his conversation, gay, lively — fluttering round subjects which he just touched, and away to another — expressing his thoughts with so little reserve that his correspondents, considering the letter as a part of their friend, *had never the heart to burn it.*" — W. JACKSON.

Bath, September 2nd.

My dear Jackson, — I should have wrote to you sooner, but have been strangely hurried since I left Exeter. In my way home I met Lord Shelburne, who insisted on my making him a short visit, and I don't repent going (though I generally do to all lords' houses), as I met with Mr. Dunning [afterwards Lord Ashburton] there.

There is something exclusive of the clear and deep understanding of that gentleman most exceedingly pleasing to me. He seems the only man who talks as Giardini plays, if you know what I mean. He puts no more motion than what goes to the real performance, which constitutes that ease and gentility peculiar to clever fellows, each in their way. I observe his forehead juts out, and mine runs back a good deal more than common, which accounts for some difference betwixt our

parts, no doubt; but he has an uncommon share of brains, and those disposed so as to overlook all the rest of his parts, let them be ever so powerful. He is an amazing compact man in every respect, and as we get a sight of everything by comparison, only think of the difference betwixt Mr. Dunning, almost motionless, with a mind brandishing like lightning from corner to corner of the earth, whilst a long, cross-made fellow only flings his arms about like thrashing-flails, without half an idea of what he would be at. And besides this neatness in outward appearance, his storeroom seems cleared of all French ornaments and gingerbread work; everything is simplicity and elegance, and in its proper place; no disorder or confusion in the furniture, as if he were going to remove. Sober sense and great acuteness are marked very strong in his face, but if those were all, I should only admire him as a great lawyer, but there is a genius (in our sense of the word) that shines in all he says.

In short, Mr. Jackson, of Exeter, I begin to think that there is something in the air of Devonshire that grows clever fellows. I could name four or five of you superior to the product of any other county in England.

Pray make my compliments to one lady who is neat about her mouth, if you can guess, and

Believe me, most faithfully yours,
THOS. GAINSBOROUGH.

Dear Jackson, — I will confess to you that I think it unpardonable in me not to speak seriously upon a subject of so much consequence as that which has employed us of late, therefore you shall now have my thoughts without any humming, sweeting, or affectation of wit. Indeed, my affection for you would naturally have led me that way before now, but that I am soon lost if I pretend to reasoning, and you, being all regularity and judgment, I own provoke me the more to break loose, as he who cannot be correct is apt to divert the eye with a little freedom of handling. But no more of it. I must own your calculations and comparison betwixt our different professions to be just, provided you remember that in mine a man may do great things and starve in a garret, if he does not conquer his passions and conform to the common eye in choosing that branch which they will encourage and pay for. Now there cannot be that difference betwixt music and painting unless you suppose that the musician volun-

tarily shuns the only profitable branch, and will be a chamber counsel when he might appear at the Bar. You see I am out of my subject already.

But now in again! If music will not satisfy you without a certainty (which, by-the-by, is nonsense, begging your pardon, for there is no such thing in any profession), then I say, be a painter. You have more of the painter than half those that get money by it.

You want a little drawing and the use of pencil and colors, which I could put into your hand in one month without meddling with your head. I propose to let that alone if you'll let mine off easy! There is a branch of painting next in profit to portrait, and quite in your power, without any more drawing than I'll answer for your having, which is drapery and landscape backgrounds.

Perhaps you don't know that while a face painter is harassed to death, the drapery painter sits and earns his five or six hundred a year and laughs all the while. Your next will be to tell me what I know as well as yourself, viz., that I am an impertinent coxcomb. This I know, and will speak out if you kill me for it — that you are too modest, too diffident, too sensible, and too honest ever to push in music.

Yours,

T. G.

Dear Jackson, — I am so pleased with both your remarks and your indigo that I know not which to admire most, or which to think most of immediate use. The indigo you leave me in doubt whether there be any more to be got, whereas I am pretty sure of some more of your thoughts now that we are fairly settled into a correspondence. Your observations are like all yours — just, natural, and not common. Your indigo is clear, like your understanding, and pure, like your music, not to say exactly of the same blue of that heaven from whence all your ideas are reflected. To say the truth of your indigo, 'tis delightful, so look sharp for some more (and I'll send you a drawing), and for your thoughts, I have often flattered myself I was just going to think so. The lugging in objects, whether agreeable to the whole or not, is a sign of the least genius of anything, for a person able to collect in the mind will certainly group in the mind also, and if he cannot master a number of objects so as to introduce them in friendship, let him do but a few, and that you know, my boy, makes simplicity.

One part of a picture ought to be like the first part of a tune—that you guess what follows, and that makes the second part of the tune; and so I've done. The harp is packed up to come to you, and you shall take it out with Miss —, and I'll not take anything for it, but give it to you to twang upon when you can't twang upon Mrs. Jackson, to whom pray my compliments, if there is no impropriety in the introduction. However, please to believe me what I really am,

Yours most sincerely,

THOS. GAINSBOROUGH.

Bath, February 14th, 1769.

Dear Jackson,—I have not had time since my hurry of finishing two full-lengths and a landscape to answer your last two letters. . . . I fear, my lad, I shall have it this exhibition, for never were such slight dabs presented to the eyes of a million; but I grow dauntless out of sheer stupidity as I grow old, and I believe any one that plods on in any one way, especially if that one way will bring him bread and cheese as well as a better, will grow the same. . . . Thanks for the indigo; a little of it goes a long way, which is lucky. Adieu, dear Jackson, and believe me most truly and

Sincerely yours,

THOS. GAINSBOROUGH.

Bath, August 23rd.

My dear Jackson,—I admire your notions of most things, and do agree with you that these might be exceedingly pretty pictures painted of the kind you mention. But are you sure you don't mean, instead of the flight into Egypt, my flight out of Bath? Do you consider, my dear sir, what a deal of work history pictures require to what little dirty subjects of coal horses and jackasses, and such figures as I fill up with? No, you don't consider anything about that part of the story; you design faster than any man, or any thousand men, could execute.

There is but one flight I should like to paint, and that is yours out of Exeter, for while your numerous and polite acquaintance encourage you to talk so cleverly, we shall have but few productions, real and substantial productions. But to be serious (as I know you love to be), do you really think that a regular composition in the landscape way should ever be filled with history, or any figures but such as fill a place (I won't say stop a gap), or to create a little business for the eye, to be drawn from the trees in order to return to them with more glee? I did not know that you

admired those tragi-comic pictures, because some have thought that a regular history picture may have too much background, and the composition hurt by not considering what ought to be principal. But I talk now like old Square-toes. There's no rule of that kind, says you, but then, says I, You lie. If I had but room and time before Palmer seals his packet I'd trim you! I have been riding out with him this morning.

Adieu, T. G.

My dear Jackson,—I will suppose all you say about my exhibition pictures to be true, because I have not time to dispute it with you. I am much obliged to you, and wish I could spend a few days with you in town, but I have begun a large picture of Tommy Linley and his sister, and cannot come.

I suppose you know the boy is bound for Italy the first opportunity. Pray do you remember carrying me to a picture-dealer's somewhere by Hanover Square, and my being struck with the leaving and touch of a little bit of tree, the whole picture not above eight or ten inches high, and about a foot long? I wish, if you have time, that you would inquire what it might be purchased for, and give me one line more whilst you stay in town. If you can come this way home that one may enjoy a day or two of your company, I shall be heartily glad. I can always make up a bed for a friend without any trouble, and nobody has a better claim to that title, or a better title to that claim, than yourself.

Believe me, Dear Jackson,

Yours most truly,

THOS. GAINSBOROUGH.

May 11th, 1768.

My dear Jackson,—Now you seem to lay too much stress upon me, and show yourself to be a serious fellow. I question, if you could splice all my letters together, whether you would find more connection and sense in them than in landscapes joined where half a tree was to meet half a church to make a principal object.

I should not think of pretending to reproach you, who are a regular system of philosophy, a reasonable creature, and a particular fellow. If I meant anything it was this, that many a real genius is lost in the fictitious character of a gentleman, and that as many of these creatures are continually courting you, possibly you might forget (what I, without any merit to myself remember, from mere shyness) that they make no part of the artist. De-

pend upon it, Jackson, you have more sense in your little finger than I have in my whole body and head. I am the most inconsistent, changeable being, so full of fits and starts, that if you mind what I say it will be shutting your eyes to some purpose. . . . I am only sensible of meaning and of having said that I wish you lived nearer me.

Yours up to the hilt,

T. G.

January 25th, 1777.

Dear Jackson, — I suppose I never drew a portrait half so like the sitter as my silence since the receipt of your last resembles neglect and ingratitude, owing to two of the crossdest accidents that ever attended a poor fiddler. First and most unfortunately, I have been four times after Bach and have never laid eyes on him; and secondly and most provokingly, I have had a parcel made up of two drawings and a box of pencils such as you wrote for, ever since the day after I received your favor inclosing the tenths, and directed for you to go by the Exeter coach, which has laid in my room by the neglect of two blockheads — one my nephew, who is too proud to carry a bundle under his arm, though his betters, the journeymen tailors, do so, and my cowardly footman, who, forsooth, is afraid to peep into the street for fear of being pressed into sea-service (the only service he was made for!) — so that, my dear Jackson, if it was not for your being endowed with Job's patience, I should think myself deservedly forever shut out of your favor; but surely I shall catch Bach soon, to get you an answer to your letter, and for the drawings, I'll carry them myself to the inn to-morrow.

There is a letter of nonsense inclosed with the drawings, to plague you once more about sixths and tenths, which you may read or not as you happen to be in humor when you see the drawings. Till then I'm sure you can't bear the sight of my odious hand, so no more at present, as the saying is, but

Yours sincerely,

T. G.

Pall Mall.

You hear, I suppose, that all the lords and members have given up their privilege of franking, to ease the taxes. I'm sorry for it.

My dear Jackson, — I am much obliged to you for your last letter and the lessons received before. I think I now begin to see a little into the nature of modulation

and the introduction of sharps and flats, and when we meet you shall hear me play extempore. My friend Abel has been to visit me, but he made but a short stay, being obliged to go to Paris for a month or six weeks, after which he has promised to come again. There never was a poor wretch so fond of harmony with so little knowledge of it, so that what you have done is pure charity.

I'm sick of portraits, and wish very much to take my *viol da gam*, and walk off to some sweet village where I can paint landskips, and enjoy the fag-end of life in quietness and ease. But these fine ladies, with their tea-drinkings, dancings, husband-huntings, etc., etc., will job me out of the last ten years, and I fear miss getting husbands too.

But we can say nothing to these things, you know, Jackson; we must jog on, and be content with the jingling of the bells only. I hate kicking up a dust and being confined in harness, to follow the track whilst others ride in the wagon, under cover, stretching their legs in the straw at ease, and gazing at green trees and blue skies without half my taste. That's hard. My comfort is that I have five *viol da gambas*, three sayes, and two barak normans.

Adieu, dear Jackson, and

Believe me ever and sincerely yours,

THOS. GAINSBOROUGH.

Bath, June 4th.

From Macmillan's Magazine.

POOR MATTHIAS.

POOR MATTHIAS! — Found him lying
Fall'n beneath his perch and dying? —
Found him stiff, you say, though warm —
All convulsed his little form?
Poor canary! many a year
Well he knew his mistress dear;
Now in vain you call his name,
Vainly raise his rigid frame,
Vainly warm him in your breast,
Vainly kiss his golden crest —
Smooth his ruffled plumage fine,
Touch his trembling beak with wine.
One more gasp — it is the end!
Dead and mute our tiny friend!
— Songster thou of many a year,
Now thy mistress brings thee here,
Says, it fits that I rehearse,
Tribute ask'd by thee, a verse,
Meed for daily song of yore
Silent now forevermore.

Poor Matthias! Wouldst thou have
More than pity? claim'st a stave? —

Friends more near us than a bird
 We dismiss'd without a word.
 Rover, with the good brown head,
 Great Atossa, they are dead —
 Dead, and neither prose nor rhyme
 Tells the praises of their prime.
 Thou didst know them old and gray,
 Know them in their sad decay ;
 Thou hast seen Atossa sage
 Sit for hours beside thy cage ;
 Thou wouldst chirp, thou foolish bird,
 Flutter, chirp — she never stirr'd !
 What were now these toys to her ?
 Down she sank amid her fur —
 Eyed thee with a soul resign'd —
 And thou deem'dst cats were kind !
 — Cruel, but composed and bland,
 Dumb, inscrutable and grand,
 So Tiberius might have sat,
 Had Tiberius been a cat.

Rover died — Atossa too.
 Less than they to us are you !
 Nearer human were their powers,
 Closer knit their life with ours.
 Hands had stroked them, which are cold,
 Now for years, in churchyard mould ;
 Comrades of our past were they,
 Of that unreturning day.
 Changed and aging, they and we
 Dwelt, it seem'd, in sympathy.
 Away from their presence broke
 Somewhat which remembrance woke
 Of the loved, the lost, the young —
 Yet they died, and died unsung.

Geist came next, our little friend ;
 Geist had verse to mourn his end.
 Yes, but that enforcement strong
 Which compell'd for Geist a song —
 All that gay courageous cheer,
 All that human pathos dear ;
 Soul-fed eyes with suffering worn,
 Pain heroically borne,
 Faithful love in depth divine —
 Poor Matthias, were they thine ?

Max and Kaiser we to-day
 Greet upon the lawn at play.
 Max a dachshound without blot —
 Kaiser should be, but is not ;
 Max, with shining yellow coat,
 Prinking ears and dewlap throat —
 Kaiser, with his collie face,
 Penitent for want of race.
 — Which may be the first to die,
 Vain to augur, they or I !
 But, as age comes on, I know,
 Poet's fire gets faint and low ;
 If so be that travel they
 First the inevitable way,
 Much I doubt if they shall have
 Dirge of mine to crown their grave.

Yet, poor bird, thy tiny corse
 Moves me, somehow, to remorse ;
 Something haunts my conscience, brings
 Sad, compunctious visitings.

Other favorites, dwelling here,
 Open lived to us, and near ;
 Well we knew when they were glad,
 Plain we saw if they were sad —
 Joy'd with them when they were gay,
 Sooth'd them in their last decay —
 Sympathy could feel and show
 Both in weal of theirs and woe.

Birds, companions more unknown,
 Live beside us, but alone ;
 Finding not, do all they can,
 Passage from their souls to man.
 Kindness we bestow, and praise,
 Laud their plumage, greet their lays ;
 Still, beneath their feather'd breast,
 Stirs a history unexpress'd.
 Wishes there, and feelings strong,
 Incommunicably throng ;
 What they want, we cannot guess,
 Fail to track their deep distress —
 Dull look on when death is nigh,
 Note no change, and let them die.
 Poor Matthias ! couldst thou speak,
 What a tale of thy last week !
 Every morning did we pay
 Stupid salutations gay,
 Suited well to health, but how
 Mocking, how incongruous now !
 Cake we offer'd, sugar, seed,
 Never doubtful of thy need ;
 Praised, perhaps, thy courteous eye,
 Praised thy golden livery.
 Gravely thou the while, poor dear !
 Sat'st upon thy perch to hear,
 Fixing with a mute regard
 Us, thy human keepers hard,
 Troubling, with our chatter vain,
 Ebb of life, and mortal pain —
 Us, unable to divine
 Our companion's dying sign,
 Or o'erpass the severing sea
 Set betwixt ourselves and thee,
 Till the sand thy feathers smirch
 Fallen dying off thy perch !

Was it, as the Grecian sings,
 Birds were born the first of things,
 Before the sun, before the wind,
 Before the gods, before mankind,
 Airy, ante-mundane throng —
 Witness their unworldly song !
 Proof they give, too, primal powers,
 Of a prescience more than ours —
 Teach us, while they come and go,
 When to sail, and when to sow.
 Cuckoo calling from the hill,
 Swallow skimming by the mill,
 Mark the seasons, map our year,
 As they show and disappear.
 But, with all this travail sage
 Brought from that anterior age,
 Goes an unreversed decree
 Whereby strange are they and we ;
 Making want of theirs, and plan,
 Indiscernible by man.

No, away with tales like these
 Stol'n from Aristophanes !

Does it, if we miss your mind,
 Prove us so remote in kind?
 Birds! we but repeat on you
 What amongst ourselves we do.
 Somewhat more or somewhat less,
 'Tis the same unskilfulness.
 What you feel, escapes our ken —
 Know we more our fellow-men?
 Human suffering at our side,
 Ah, like yours is undescried!
 Human longings, human fears,
 Miss our eyes and miss our ears,
 Little helping, wounding much,
 Dull of heart, and hard of touch,
 Brother man's despairing sign
 Who may trust us to divine?
 Who assure us, sundering powers
 Stand not 'twixt his soul and ours?

Poor Matthias! See, thy end
 What a lesson doth it lend!
 For that lesson thou shalt have,
 Dead canary bird! a stave;
 Telling how, one stormy day,
 Stress of gale and showers of spray
 Drove my daughter small and me
 Inland from the rocks and sea.
 Driv'n inshore, we follow down
 Ancient streets of Hastings town —
 Slowly thread them — when behold,

French canary-merchant old
 Shepherding his flock of gold,
 In a low dim-lighted pen,
 Scann'd of tramps and fishermen!
 There a bird, high-colored, fat,
 Proud of port, though something squat —
 Pursy, play'd-out Philistine —
 Dazzled Nelly's youthful eyne.
 But, far in, obscure, there stirr'd
 On his perch a sprightlier bird,
 Courteous-eyed, erect and slim;
 And I whisper'd: "Fix on *him*!"
 Home we brought him, young and fair,
 Songs to trill in Surrey air.
 Here Matthias sang his fill,
 Saw the cedars of Pains Hill;
 Here he pour'd his little soul,
 Heard the murmur of the Mole.
 Eight in number now the years
 He hath pleased our eyes and ears;
 Other favorites he hath known
 Go, and now himself is gone.
 — Fare thee well, companion dear!
 Fare forever well, nor fear
 Tiny though thou art, to stray
 Down the uncompanion'd way!
 We without thee, little friend,
 Many years have not to spend;
 What are left, will hardly be
 Better than we spent with thee.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

ANCIENT WORKS IN FLORIDA. — The *Travellers Herald* describes the finding of an ancient work in the digging a canal between Lakes Eustis and Dora, to open up the more southern lakes of the great lake region of Florida. The first excavations revealed the existence of a clearly defined wall lying in a line tending towards the south-west, from where it was first struck. The wall was composed of a dark brown sandstone, very much crumbled in places, but more distinct, more clearly defined, and the stone more solid as the digging increased in depth. The wall was evidently the eastern side of an ancient home or fortification, as the slope of the outer wall was to the west. About eight feet from the slope of the eastern wall a mound of sand was struck, embedded in the muck formation above and around it. This sand mound was dug into only a few inches, as the depth of the water demanded but a slight increased depth of the channel at that point; but enough was discovered to warrant the belief that here on the north-western shore of Lake Dora is submerged a city or town or fortification older by centuries than anything yet discovered in this portion of Florida. Small, curiously-shaped blocks of sandstone, some of them showing traces of fire, pieces of pottery, and utensils made of a mottled flint were thrown out by the men while working waist deep in water. One

spear-head of mottled flint, five and a half inches long by one and a quarter inches wide, nicely finished, was taken from the top of the sand mound, and about four feet below the water level of the lake.

THE CHEMICAL INGREDIENTS OF CIGAR-SMOKE. — In the chemical laboratory of the Bremen Sanitary Administration various experiments have lately been made for the elucidation of the above subject. According to the results obtained, some of the ingredients of tobacco-smoke are productive of poisonous effects, such as carbonic oxide, sulphide of hydrogen, etc., besides nicotine. The last-named substance is the one from which injurious effects from the use of tobacco arise, as the other substances named are of a very fugitive nature, and exist in but limited quantities in tobacco-smoke. According to the theory propounded in the statement in question, the quantity of nicotine destroyed during smoking is but small, hence it accumulates in the unconsumed end, which contains a proportion of nicotine in inverse ratio to its own size, as the longer a cigar is smoked the greater is the quantity of nicotine in the remaining part.

Lancet.